

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

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SERVING UP SOME STELLAR, UNDER THE RADAR 1971 BAROLI AND BARBARESCI



While any lineup that includes Bartolo Mascarello, Giuseppe Mascarello y Figli, Marcarini, Giuseppe Rinaldi, Aldo Conterno and Bruno Giacosa can hardly be called “under the radar” with any semblance of reality, the goal of this tasting organized by Mannie Berk of The Rare Wine Company at the end of November was to highlight just how good the 1971 vintage is a step below the *crème de la crème* of bottlings such as Giacomo Conterno Monfortino, the Bruno Giacosa Red Label Riservas and the like. The most famous and highly sought after 1971 Baroli and Barbaresci have understandably gotten very, very pricey in the last decade—deservedly so one might add, if price is no object and the finest quality is sought after— but, there are still many superb examples of the 1971 Piemonte vintage that are at their peaks today and not priced completely in the stratosphere. Some of the wines are fairly well known, such as those producers who I listed above, but others remain really somewhat obscured today and the excellent and classical style of their wines back in the 1960s and 1970s has largely been lost in the shifting sands of passing time. For example, Ceretto’s turn to the fully modern camp in the mid-to-late 1980s now obscures the fact that they made very, very good, completely classical style wines back in this decade, and prices are correspondingly far more reasonable for their older wines (when one can find them) than is the case with the big names from this era. Similarly, it is not widely recognized just how beautiful the wines were from Oddero back in this era, as they have slipped off the radar of many Barolo lovers and are not sought after with anywhere near the same fervor as some of the other great classicists from this period in Piemonte.

While many may think of the 1971 vintage in Piemonte as now quite “old”, with the vintage only a couple of years away from celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, the reality of old school, classically structured Barolo and Barbaresco is that the vintage is not really that old and many of the wines are just now starting to arrive at their peaks of maturity. In fact, one of the striking things about this particular tasting was where the vast, vast majority of these wines were in their evolutionary curves, as most still showed a bit of tannin and were not yet at their full apogees and will continue to improve for at least the coming decade and drink for another twenty years or more after that! We had a few wines that were at their peaks and will not improve further with bottle age, such as the lovely Bussia di Monforte from Aldo Conterno or the

Barbaresco “Montefico” from Ceretto, but a great many more were still in the midst of blossoming and will be even better with a bit more bottle age! Wines such as the Ovello Riserva from the Produttori del Barbaresco, Bruno Giacosa’s blended bottling of Barbaresco, Oddero’s Barolo or Marcarini’s Brunate are at a very good point to drink today, but still not at their peaks and will continue to improve with a bit more aging, while wines like Bartolo Mascarello’s Barolo and Giuseppe Rinaldi’s Barolo are still probably a decade away from their absolute apogees and really could do with a bit more cellaring to allow their still present tannins to further soften and the wines to open even more completely! That is the wonder of old school Piemonte wines, as they take many decades in the cellar to really hit their apogees in great vintages such as 1971 or 1978.

If I were looking for a great, mature vintage from the region for current drinking, and had access to well-stored older wines (such as the inventory of The Rare Wine Company) and the wherewithal to purchase them, I would suggest focusing on the vintages of 1964 and 1967, as these wines are now fully into their plateaus of peak maturity (or very near) and are drinking with great style and complexity today. In particular, the underrated and absolutely *à point* 1967 vintage can provide a lot of thrills at the present time, while the more powerful and potentially even greater 1964s still have a bit of tannin to them. When one moves into the decade of the 1970s, the two very best vintages of 1971 and 1978 are still a bit on the youthful side, though with proper decanting, still very, very pleasurable wines to drink, and even the 1974 vintage, which is the third best year of the decade, could do with a bit more time to blossom completely. In the decade of the 1970s, it is the two unheralded, but very tasty vintages of 1970 and 1979 that I feel are giving the most pleasure in the glass today. Neither vintage is a “great year” in Piemonte, as the wines did not quite possess the structural chassis and great depth of fruit found in the ‘71s or ‘78s for instance, but they are both very, very good vintages and have been at their peaks now for ten years or more and offer up beautiful complexity, balance and refinement in the glass today.

The 1971 vintage was a great, great year in Piemonte, and at the time, was probably the best year in the Langhe since the legendary 1964s. The 1971s had come on the heels of another truly outstanding year as well in 1970, which was far from typical in the Langhe at this time. Back in this era in the region, it was very, very rare to have two top quality vintages back to back, as the weather patterns were far less forgiving here prior to global warming, and a good decade of wine growing in Piemonte before climate change would generally include only three great years out of ten (if the locals were fortunate). But the 1970 vintage in Piemonte was indeed of very high quality, and the 1971s that followed were even better. Renato Ratti bestowed the ‘71s with his highest ranking of an “Exceptional Year”, which is higher than he ranked either the 1964 or the 1958 vintages, though I would have to disagree with him in this regard, as 1964 remains one of the very greatest vintages in Piemonte of the last half century and he has underrated this year a bit. The 1971 season did not start out propitiously, as (according to Sheldon Wasserman) there was plenty of rain in the months of April, May and June that ended up disrupting the flowering and cut back potential yields early on in the growing season. However, after the flowering, the summer settled in nicely and produced as fine a growing season as the winegrowers in the Langhe could have dared to hope. The weather was picture perfect all through the summer and autumn of 1971, with plenty of sun, warm temperatures (but not too hot) and the grapes ripened very evenly and beautifully in the great “Indian Summer”

conditions found here in October of this year. This perfect weather would be translated into perfectly balanced wines, with plenty of well-integrated tannin and excellent depth at the core for long-term aging.

After the struggles with the flowering, the yields ended up not being all that bad for the 1971s and the perfect growing conditions help offset some of the potential losses caused by the rainy spring weather. Looking through Sheldon Wasserman's book on Italian wines, one finds that the 1971 crop in Piemonte was the third largest of the entire decade of the 1970s and that its average yields were actually a bit larger than the yields in subsequent top quality vintages such as 1978, 1982, 1985, 1988 and 1989. Nevertheless, many of the top producers back in the day recall the 1971 vintage as a fairly small, extremely high quality crop. From the outset, the quality of the 1971 vintage must have been clearly obvious to winegrowers in the region, as the beautifully ripe grapes provided wines that were both elegant and concentrated right out of the blocks, with quite even and ripe tannins for young Baroli and Barbaresci, excellent concentration at the core, and really superb expression of underlying soil tones. Sheldon Wasserman, in his fine book, quotes several producers about the quality of the 1971s, with Alfredo Currado of Vietti calling them absolutely "complete wines- more consistent than the '78s" and qualitatively "at a higher level" than 1978. Bartolo Mascarello also ranked the 1971s as the finest vintage of the decade- ahead of the 1970s, 1974s and 1978s. They made perfect dance partners with the very good 1970s that preceded them, as the '70s were a bit more forward out of the blocks and offered up the earlier charm, which served perfectly to allow the deeper and more structured 1971s to rest comfortably in cellars and evolve at the leisurely pace of a truly great, great year in the region.

Given that 1971 was still far in advance of any of the modern techniques starting to infiltrate into the region, the vintage also has the benefit of being one of the last of the great vintages in Piemonte where there was no stylistically-compromised wines from French *barriques* or roto-fermenters. In this era, Barolo and Barbaresco were hardly international superstars and there was no attendant pressure to make the wines easier to understand and more approachable in their youth so as to placate new customers for the wines of the region who did not have the experience or historical curiosity to understand that truly "great" vintages in the Langhe produced very, very long-lived wines that would take decades to fully mature. Those new clients would not start to discover the best wines of Piemonte until the decade of the 1980s, so the 1971 vintage was still one where almost every wine produced was done in the classical style of long maceration periods, with plenty of submerged caps to enhance extraction, followed by three to seven years (or more) aging in large, old Slavonian oak *botti* prior to bottling in either bottles or demijohns. Times were far more leisurely in Piemonte in this era, where the advent of two high quality vintages back to back with 1970 and 1971 were treated as a great gift, but given the great natural structures of the 1971s, it was simply a given that the wines would be raised in the old school fashion and there would be absolutely no need to rush to drink them. As the 1971s were fermenting in the cellars, the 1958s would have been the vintage that producers were just starting to drink a bit, if the occasion called for a great vintage, or they were happily enjoying the lesser years between the '58s and '64s with their meals, and in no way considered the thought of crafting the superb 1971s in any manner but those prescribed by tradition in the region. In due course, they would drink their 1958s at their peaks and then consider beginning to start in on their 1964s and 1967s, before turning their attention to the 1970s and eventually the 1971s.



Consequently, the 1971 vintage today is drinking at or near its peak, with the very greatest wines still really a bit too young for primetime drinking, while those that do not come from the very best *terroirs* or the very finest winemakers of this era now in the heart of their periods of peak drinkability and offering up great complexity and pleasure. But, this is very much an old school vintage, and even though the wines are closing in on their half century marks, there are certainly still some that have a bit of backend tannin and could do with more bottle age before they reach their plateaus of peak maturity. For example, at our dinner in November, several tasters commented that they were surprised about how much tannin the Giuseppe Rinaldi Barolo still showed on the backend, despite it being forty-seven years of age! And it far from the exception, particularly for the biggest names of the vintage, so keep this in mind when thinking about drinking 1971s today. Like all classic vintages from this era, the wines benefit immensely from extended aeration times, and do not get squeamish when deciding when to open the wines, as at least a handful of hours in decanter is going to be benefit the wines immensely. For our dinner, which began with Champagne and hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 PM, the wines were opened and double-decanted at 2:00 PM and then given at least a couple of hours in decanter prior to serving, so as to allow them to start to blossom before drinking- and we hit a few wines that could have benefited from even more aeration!

The vast majority of the following wines were tasted at our dinner at the end of November of this year. I should mention that the dinner was held at The Table in Madison,

Connecticut, where chef Paul Barron prepared a superb, Langhe-focused menu to complement the wines that were being served. It did not hurt that he had plenty of white truffles to work with! The restaurant is a cozy, single room with one long table, which will probably seat comfortably about fourteen people, and which was really a superb place to host a tasting of this sort. If you happen to find yourself in the neighborhood of Madison and would like to organize a location for a serious tasting, The Table is a very, very good choice and comes highly recommended. The tasting notes below are listed alphabetically, with Barbaresco listed first and Barolo second. After the notes from our November dinner, I have appended a few other recent tasting notes on the 1971 Piemonte vintage at the end of the article, despite the notes having already appeared in recent issues of the newsletter. This makes it possible to take a look at most of my recent notes on the vintage all in one place, but I apologize in advance for the duplication this will cause in the database.

Barbaresci

1971 Barbaresco “Montefico”- Ceretto (San Cassiano)

I first tasted the 1971 Montefico from Ceretto back in the fall of 2010, when I had a chance to write an article comparing the 1971, 1964 and 1958 vintages in Piemonte. I really like the wines from Ceretto from the decade of the 1970s and this bottle of Montefico was drinking beautifully again eight years down the road from the last time I had a chance to enjoy it. The bouquet is completely mature and beautifully complex and expressive, wafting from the glass in a lovely blend of dried cherries, red curry, gamebird, *sous bois*, a touch of orange peel and lovely spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and tangy, with a fine core of fruit, just a whisper of remaining tannin and lovely focus and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. This is a 1971 that is at its apogee today, but still has plenty of life in it and will continue to drink very well for many, many years to come. It is a pity Ceretto does not make wines in this style anymore! 2018-2035. **91.**

1971 Barbaresco- Bruno Giacosa (Neive)

The 1971 Bruno Giacosa white label Barbaresco is a beautiful wine, which I assume was made from a blend of different vineyards. I have drunk white label, single vineyard bottlings of Santa Stefano, Montefico and Albesani from *Signor* Giacosa from the 1971 vintage, but had never crossed paths with the blended bottling of Barbaresco prior to our November dinner. The wine is beautifully sappy, red fruity and almost exotic in its aromatic profile, which made me wonder if there was a bit of Asili fruit in this cuvée. In any event, the wine is stellar, soaring from the glass in a perfumed and sappy blend of red and black cherries, peppermint, gamebird, forest floor, sweet licorice, dried flowers, woodsmoke and a delicate topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and gently sappy at the core, with marvelous focus and balance, still a touch of backend tannin and outstanding length and grip on the poised, complex and utterly refined finish. Great juice. 2018-2055+. **95.**

1971 Barbaresco “Ovello” Riserva- Produttori del Barbaresco (Cavalieri di Tartufo label)

As I have mentioned in the past, the Cavalieri di Tartufo is an organization somewhat akin to the *Confrérie de Chevaliers du Tastevin* in Burgundy and purchased wines from some of the top producers in the region and had their own labels attached to the bottles, so that they would have some appropriately serious wines to drink with their white truffles. The Ovello 1971 from the Produttori was one of these wines that they purchased from the vintage and had labeled with their distinctive labels, but the wine is identical to the bottling sold under the Produttori's own labels. The wine is very, very good and drinking quite nicely, offering up a pure and

complex bouquet of black cherries, cassis, road tar, beautiful herb tones (primarily oregano and tarragon), a lovely base of soil, licorice and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, poised and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent focus and grip, resolved tannins and a very long, classy and perfectly balanced finish. This is another 1971 Langhe wine that is at its peak of maturity today, but still has tons of life ahead of it. 2018-2040. **92.**



Baroli

1971 Barolo- Barisone (Torino)

Oswaldo Barisone was a wine merchant from this era in the city of Torino, who purchased older wines from local producers in demijohn and had them bottled and labeled with his own labels. His 1971 Barolo bottling is from Francesco Rinaldi and spent many years in demijohn prior to bottling, and based on the apparent age of the corks, we speculated that this particular wine was probably bottled sometime in the decade of the 1990s. *Signor* Barisone did not bottle all of his purchased demijohns at the same time, and I have had this wine previously and it showed even better and I would guess was from an earlier-bottled version. This particular bottle was quite good, offering up a nobly rustic nose of dried black cherries, road tar, hung game, red curry, licorice, oregano, camphor, a touch of walnut and a balsamic topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and slightly four-square in personality, with a respectable core, still a bit of backend tannin and a long, well-balanced and wide open finish. Previous bottles have tracked a few points higher, but this was still quite satisfying. 2018-2040. **89.**

1971 Barolo “Bussia di Monforte”- Aldo Conterno (Monforte d’Alba)

The 1971 Bussia di Monforte from Aldo Conterno is a classically-styled and perfectly resolved wine that is now drinking at its absolute peak. The wine is really beautiful on the nose, offering up scents of red and black cherries, gamebird, camphor, anise, road tar, forest floor, fresh oregano and a topnote of dried roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tertiary in its complexity, with a fine core, impressive soil signature, completely resolved tannins and a long, focused and beautifully balanced finish. This is now getting towards the far side of its plateau of peak maturity and will probably start to gently descend in the not too distant future, but will continue to drink well for the next decade or more. 2018-2028+. **92.**

1971 Barolo “Riserva”- Franco-Fiorina

It had been four years since I last enjoyed a bottle of the very good 1971 Barolo Riserva from Franco-Fiorina and the wine was showing very well this past November. The bouquet is deep, black fruity and wide open, offering up a complex blend of dark berries, black cherries, hung game, bonfire, road tar, oregano, licorice and a fine base of autumnal soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and sturdy in personality, with excellent mid-palate depth, lovely focus and grip and still a bit of backend tannin perking up the long and classic finish. This is very good juice with plenty of life still ahead of it. 2018-2045. **92.**

1971 Barolo “Brunate”- Marcarini (La Morra)

Our bottle of '71 Brunate from Marcarini was slightly “off” at our recent tasting, so I include here my note from a superior bottle tasted in October of 2017, which was included in Issue 73 at the start of this year. I should note that I have experienced a bit of bottle variation with the '71 Brunate, and there are even superior bottles of this wine out there than the one I last tasted in the fall of last year, with pristine examples meriting 95 points. The 1971 Brunate from Marcarini is a gorgeous and complex wine at the peak of its powers today. The nose jumps from the glass in a complex mélange of cherries, camphor, gamebird, a touch of dried eucalyptus, beef broth, road tar and a lovely base of forest floor. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still nicely sappy at the core, with still a bit of backend tannin, fine acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, poised and wide open finish. Fine juice that will keep cruising along at a fine altitude for many, many years to come. I should note that I have had even better bottles of this in the recent past, but this one, while still very good, was not quite up to their pristine example. 2017-2040. **92+.**

1971 Barolo- Bartolo Mascarello (Barolo)

The 1971 vintage from Bartolo Mascarello is one of the finest wines that he produced over his very long and illustrious career, but this is also one of the great examples of the vintage that I would let sleep in the cellar for at least a handful more years, as the wine is still climbing in quality and clearly not yet at its peak. The bouquet is pure and beautifully expressive today, wafting from the glass in a complex mix of red and black cherries, camphor, roasted squab, a very refined base of soil tones, a touch of anise and a topnote of hazelnut. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still fairly structured, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent soil signature, tangy acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long and still moderately tannic finish. This is hardly difficult to drink today, but it is going to be better still with further bottle age! 2018-2055+. **96+.**

1971 Barolo- Giuseppe Mascarello y Figli (Monchiero)

It had been close to a decade since I last tasted the blended Barolo from Mauro and his father Giuseppe Mascarello, and the wine continues to drink beautifully. Readers may recall that Mauro had only convinced his father to make a Monprivato bottling on its own the year before,

in 1970, so this was one of the first blended Barolo bottlings here to not include the oldest vines from Monprivato in the cuvée. There are still some younger vines from Monprivato in this blend, as Giuseppe had replanted a portion of the vineyard in 1962 and those younger vines did not go into the single vineyard bottling. The rest of the fruit for this wine hailed from purchased grapes from the excellent vineyards of Villero and Bussia in the village of Castiglione Falletto. The wine is outstanding on the nose, which wafts from the glass in a complex mix of black cherries, *sous bois*, roasted game, oregano, camphor and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very nicely balanced, with a fine core of fruit, fairly low acidity today for the vintage, still a bit of melting backend tannin and fine length and grip on the fully mature finish. This was showing very well, but my gut feeling was that past bottles of this wine have been even a hair better, as this bottle seemed just a touch linear in comparison to prior showings. Still, I had no trouble drinking it! 2018-2040. **90.**

1971 Barolo- Natale Mascarello (Barolo)

Natale Mascarello was Giuseppe Mascarello's brother (and Mauro Mascarello's uncle), and he eventually took his share of the family's vineyards with him and started making wines on his own, which he did up until his passing in 1979. The brothers' father, Maurizio Mascarello, had passed away in 1923 and the two brothers worked together for many years, before Natale set off on his own. Part of Natale's share of the family vineyard legacy included a seventy *ares* slice of Monprivato, so this 1971 blended Barolo included quite a bit of Monprivato fruit in it. Natale's 1971 Barolo is a good wine, but crafted in a more rustic and robust style than the wines made by his nephew Mauro in this era. This particular bottle had a bit of volatile acidity on the nose and palate, but this was not out of control. The bouquet offers up scents of black cherries, balsamic tones, a good base of autumnal soil, a nice touch of upper register spice tones and a bit of fruitcake. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and broad-shouldered, with a good core of fruit, melted tannins and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is still a good, solid wine, but ultimately, it lacks a bit of complexity *vis à vis* the other wines in this lineup. 2018-2040. **88.**

1971 Barolo- Podere e Cantine Oddero (La Morra)

The Oddero family has a long history of producing Barolo, as their first bottled vintage was the 1878! However, today, they remain relatively under the radar and their older wines can offer up excellent value. In this era, the Oddero family did not even make a Riserva bottling, as they only produced a single cuvée of blended Barolo. In 1971, Giacomo Oddero had been expanding his vineyard holdings for seven or eight years and had purchased vines in some of the very best crus in the region, so that this wine ended up being composed entirely of fruit from what were then new purchases for the family in the superb crus of Rocche di Castiglione and Brunate. A pretty good foundation! This wine took a few minutes after being served to start to blossom, but once it opened up, it showed beautifully. The very complex bouquet is deep, refined and at its peak, offering up scents of red and black cherries, gamebird, bonfire, a touch of red curry, licorice, road tar, forest floor, roses and gentle spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely tarry, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and still a bit of backend tannin perking up the long, complex and classy finish. This is very, very good and utterly classical in personality. 2018-2040. **92.**



1971 Barolo- Giuseppe Rinaldi (Barolo)

Beppe Rinaldi's 1971 Barolo is an outstanding example of the vintage, but it is also the youngest 1971 I have tasted in quite some time and really needs another decade in the cellar to start to drop its backend tannin and really start to drink within its plateau of peak maturity! The bouquet is deep and classically complex, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of cherries, sweet onions, gamebird, fresh oregano, camphor and *sous bois*. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and absolutely rock solid at the core, with good acids, fine focus and grip and still a surprisingly robust bit of tannin on the long finish. This is approachable today, but it is still a fairly young wine and I would opt to keep it tucked away in the cellar for at least another eight to ten years and really let it reach its apogee. 2018-2055. 93+.

1971 Barolo "Briacca"- Vietti (Castiglione Falletto)

The 1971 Barolo "Briacca" from Vietti is rather a unique bottling, as this wine is made from the now fairly rare nebbiolo clone of *Nebbiolo Rosè*, which produces lighter-styled wines. I have never had this bottling before from 1971, so I do not know if its relatively disappointing showing at our tasting in November was caused by a slightly off bottle, or if this is just the wine. The color is notably paler than the other 1971s in the lineup, but color is hardly a dependable indicator for anything with nebbiolo in general. The bouquet is complex enough, but not

particularly refined, as it offers up scents of sautéed onions, dried cherries, oregano, volatile acidity, prunes and damp soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and fairly volatile, with moderate depth at the core, good focus and grip, but not a lot of complexity or length and ends with a less than exciting note of pruniness. This may just be an unrepresentative bottle. 2018-2035? **84+**?

A Few Other 1971s Tasted In the Last Couple of Years:

Most of these following notes appeared in Issue 73's large piece on Piemonte. A few date from a year or two further back, and I include them here as well for ease of reference for readers looking for information on the 1971 vintage all in one place.

1971 Barbaresco "Albesani di Neive"- Bruno Giacosa (Neive)

The Albesani vineyard in Neive lies on the same hillside as Santa Stefano, but only about half of the vineyard shares the same southwesterly aspect as its more famous neighbor, with the northern part of Albesani having an exposition to the northwest and not in the same league as the rest of the vineyard. To the best of my knowledge, Bruno Giacosa only produced a cru bottling from Albesani in 1971, and the wine is quite good, but it is a bit more rustic *terroir* than Santa Stefano and this is still evident forty-six years out from the vintage. The wine is very good today, offering up a superb nose of cherries, gamebird, lovely spice tones, forest floor, coffee and orange peel. In fact, the bouquet is my favorite part of this wine, as the palate is not as polished as the nose suggests. The wine is full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, but a bit short on elegance, with a good core, melting tannins and a long, complex and slightly rustic finish. This is a good, solid bottle of mature Barbaresco, but not one of the great wines from *Signor* Giacosa in this magical era. 2017-2040. **90.**

1971 Barbaresco "Montefico di Barbaresco"- Bruno Giacosa (Neive)

Bruno Giacosa only made wine from the beautiful Montefico vineyard in Barbaresco in the vintages of 1969, 1970 and 1971. This is one of my absolute favorite crus in the village of Barbaresco, as it delivers a great elegance and aromatic purity at its apogee that is hard to surpass. The 1971 Montefico from Giacosa is an absolutely monumental bottle of wine (despite its being designated with a "White Label"), as it soars from the glass in a very vibrant and stunningly complex blaze of red and black cherries, licorice, underbrush, gamebirds, camphor, blood orange, fresh oregano, nutskin, red curry and a touch of black truffle in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and stunning, with a great core of sappy fruit, still a fair bit of tannin to resolve, great acids, impeccable focus and balance and stunning length and grip on the still slightly chewy finish. While this is a delicious bottle of wine to drink now with sufficient decanting time, I would not hesitate to cellar it longer and allow the structural elements to slowly melt away. A great, great wine. 2010-2060. **95.**

1971 Barbaresco "Santo Stefano di Neive"- Bruno Giacosa (Neive)

I have written often about how I feel that the difference between the white label and the red label Riservas from Bruno Giacosa is not all that dramatic, and here again is another case in point, as the 1971 Santa Stefano *normale* is a simply brilliant wine. The bouquet is pure and flat out stunning, soaring from the glass in a blaze of red and black cherries, gamebird, rose petals, fresh oregano, gorgeous soil tones, red curry, a bit of bonfire and a topnote of sweet hazelnuts. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a great sappy core of fruit, modest tannins, laser-like focus and perfect balance on the very long, seamless and complex finish. Just a breathtakingly brilliant bottle of Barbaresco at its zenith. 2017-2035. **95.**



1971 Barolo- Bel Collé (Verduno)

This was the first wine I had ever tasted from Bel Collé and I was quite impressed. The wine is deep, complex and at its apogee of peak maturity today, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of black cherries, sweet balsamic tones, gamebird, road tar, a fine base of autumnal soil and a topnote of fresh oregano. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and complex, with classically-proportioned broad shoulders, a fine core, still a touch of tannin and a long, tangy and quite elegant finish. This is a lovely wine at its apogee, but still with at least a couple of decades' worth of life ahead of it and maybe more. Very tasty. 2017-2035+. **92.**

1971 Barolo- Giacomo Conterno (Monforte d'Alba)

The 1971 Giacomo Conterno Barolo is still quite a young wine and has decades of superb drinking still in its future. The bouquet is deep, very pure and gorgeously complex, as it soars from the glass in a vibrant blend of black cherries, road tar, fresh herb tones, a bit of camphor, woodsmoke and a flat out great base of soil. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and powerful, with magical focus and balance, stunning mid-palate depth, and great length and grip on the still fairly tannic finish. As great as this wine is to drink today, I have little doubt that it is still on its way up and will be even better with an additional five to ten years of bottle age. Its freshness and muscular profile are simply amazing for a thirty-seven year-old wine, and yet I would not be tempted to open another bottle of the '71 Conterno Barolo for at least another four or five years, as the best is yet to come. A great bottle of Barolo by any stretch of the imagination, and really not far behind in quality from the legendary 1971 Monfortino. I should

observe that this note is from a bottle tasted early this fall, rather than the bottle we had in San Francisco. The San Francisco bottle was lovely, but more autumnal and tertiary in style, and without quite the punch of pure fruit of this previous bottle, and would have merited a solid 91 points. 2012-2050. **94+**.

1971 Barolo Riserva- Giacomo Conterno (Monforte d'Alba)

The 1971 Barolo Riserva from Cantine Giacomo Conterno is a wine that I had never crossed paths with previously, despite having been lucky enough to taste both the '71 *Normale* and '71 Monfortino Riserva Speciale on several occasions. This is a deep, young and tarry wine of superb depth and complexity, which offers up a complex and utterly classic bouquet of black cherries, tar, licorice, a nice touch of celery seed, fresh oregano, woodsmoke and a lovely, blossoming base of forest floor. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex, and like the '71 Monfortino, it still shows just a bit of its youthful structural elements and is clearly still climbing in quality at age forty-one, with a fair bit of well-integrated tannins, tangy acids and outstanding length and grip on the complex and very classic finish. Fine, fine juice that is drinking very well with a few hours' air, but which will be even better with further bottle age. 2012-2040. **94+**.

1971 Barolo "Monfortino" Riserva Speciale- Giacomo Conterno (Monforte d'Alba)

The monumental 1971 Monfortino is just about ready for primetime drinking! The bouquet is classic, with a deep and compelling mélange of candied black cherries, licorice, truffles, tar, smoke, a nice touch of balsamic vinegar, fresh herbs and a very pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and very well-balanced, with much stronger tar and truffley tones than the still adolescent 1974 and 1978, and a huge core of sweet fruit, great structure and grip, and a long, powerful finish that closes with notes of road tar, oregano and woodsmoke. There are still some tannins present here, but the wine is very well-balanced and has no problem supplying layers and layers of fruit to buffer the tannins that remain. It is certainly an old-fashioned Barolo in the very best sense, but its depth, intensity and stunning delineation are the stuff of legends. Just hitting its stride, drink this magnificent wine over the next three or four decades. 2008-2060. **97**.

1971 Barolo "Falletto di Serralunga" Riserva Speciale- Bruno Giacosa (Neive)

For more than twenty years, this was the most prized bottle of Barolo in my cellar, and it was very hard to open it when the time came for a special evening of Barolo and Barbaresco. But, the rest of the lineup that evening was so compelling that it was impossible not to include this bottle, and happily, the wine showed beautifully. The '71 Falletto Riserva Speciale was only the second cru bottling that Bruno Giacosa produced from this vineyard, with a 1970 white label bottling being the inaugural release. Back in this era, this was made from purchased grapes, as the family did not buy the vineyard here until 1982, and other than the 1970 and 1971, the only other vintage where this wine was produced from purchased grapes was in 1978. The 1971 Falletto Riserva Speciale is now at its peak of maturity, delivering a complex and utterly classic bouquet of red and black cherries, gentle tarry notes, forest floor, fennel seed, a touch of fresh oregano and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still rock solid at the core, with perfect maturity, melting tannins, bright acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, complex and utterly classic finish. A great wine at its zenith. 2016-2045. **96**.

**THE 2017 BURGUNDY VINTAGE:
CHABLIS IS HIT BY FROST AGAIN, BUT THE CÔTE D'OR ESCAPES**



Not everyone comes for the wine in the Côte d'Or, as one can eat as well here as any wine region in France.

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THE 2017 BURGUNDY VINTAGE: ANOTHER A SOLAR VINTAGE OF OUTSTANDING QUALITY



Another year looking across the vines to the village of Aloxe-Corton.

The 2017 vintage in Burgundy is far from homogenous, but for those who have fully captured the potential of the vintage, it is another stunningly high quality year and there are truly brilliant wines resting comfortably in the cellars of many, many domaines. The Burgundians in the Côte d'Or were able to sidestep another devastating episode of April frost damage in 2017, primarily by being proactive and doing what they could to protect their young shoots out on the vines when weather forecasts predicted another unseasonable plunge into freezing temperatures on the evening of April 26th. A great many *vignerons* took to their vineyards with bales of damp hay, which were burned in the wee hours of the morning to create a thick blanket of smoky air to protect the young shoots in the borderline freezing temperatures of the early morning. The year previously, the most egregious damage done by the frost of 2016 had been in the first few hours of light, when the sunlight focused its energy on the frozen and ice-enclosed young shoots on the vines, frying them through the prism of the ice coating and severely damaging the potential crop yields in the process. The remainder of the 2016 growing season had to live forever in the wake of that severe frost damage and the very low yields of the year will forever define the vintage. Happily for growers in most of the Côte d'Or in the April of 2017, the burning of the hay had

created a hazy early morning atmosphere that blocked the sunlight from doing comparable damage to the young shoots in the cold temperatures and a second year of severe frost damage was avoided. Not every village organized to burn the bales, as Elodie Michelot of Domaine Alain Michelot recounted that “the growers in Nuits St. Georges decided together not to burn any hay on that April night, as the weather forecasts were right on the cusp of freezing and we were very lucky, as our band of hillsides is quite uniform and no cold air from the west can sneak in through a *combe* or gap between the hills.” But, she continued, “it was a very near thing and we really just managed to escape frost damage; however, the burning of the bales of hay in other villages- my husband and I live in Ladoix-Serrigny and we woke up in the middle of the night because of the smell of hay burning in our village- did not make our neighbors who are not *vignerons* very happy, as the air pollution from the smoke was quite strong.” She recounted that Burgundian neighbors not directly involved in the wine trade took the hay burning quite poorly, and comments that “you winemakers are affluent enough already; you can afford to lose a vintage, so stop polluting our air” and the like were not uncommon in the wake of the burning of the bales to hold off the frost. And as several *vignerons* commented in the aftermath of the hay burning, everyone was very lucky that there had not been any injuries from the smoke, as it was indeed very thick in the early morning and driving was quite a challenge, but this old-fashioned protection against frost was successful and another severe frost in the spring of 2017 was averted in the Côte d’Or. It should be noted that in the wake of the hay burning, local elected officials circulated notices that such actions are not permitted and were not to be used again in the future.

However, while the somewhat contentious hay burning held off a second consecutive year of frost damage in the Côte d’Or, for growers in Chablis, where temperatures plunged a bit deeper on the evening of the 30th at the end of April in 2017, this strategy was not possible and the *Chablisienne* were handed yet another very short crop from severe frost damage. I go into the specific 2017 spring and summer growing conditions in Chablis below (in the section of the article on the region), but suffice to say that many producers in Chablis were very happy to have no frost in 2018 and to finally, after several short crops in a row, to be able to make a vintage with normal yields this year and finally have more properly-full cellars of 2018s. However, as 2018 was the hottest summer in Europe since 2003, there were other challenges for *vignerons* in both Chablis and the Côte d’Or this past year and it will be interesting a year from now to see just what the style of the 2018 Burgundies will turn out to be. But, that is a story for next year and right now it is best to focus attention solely on the 2017s, as this is indeed a very, very good vintage for Burgundy and there are some absolutely stunning wines in many cellars in both Chablis and the Côte d’Or awaiting bottling and shipping in the coming months. As I noted above, 2017 is not a homogenous vintage, as there were several key factors to unlocking the full potential of the year and it was only the producers who made all of the right decisions who produced truly brilliant wines in 2017. However, there are a great many of these, and even for those who may not have hit the vintage perfectly, they have still produced very pretty, sumptuously fruity and structurally accessible wines of great charm and purity. In fact, the region has essentially produced two vintages in 2017, with the lesser wines full of lovely fruit and promising very good early drinking, while the most successful red wines are absolute classics that will eventually be ranked right up there with the very best wines from the vintages of 2005, 2010 and 2012. The very best white wines of 2017 recall very much the style and excellent quality of the 2014s, with perhaps even superior depth of fruit. So, there are clearly some very great bottles coming from 2017.

Once the threat of frost had been successfully beaten off with the smoke screen from burning bales of hay, the growing season in the Côte d'Or unfolded quite well and the vineyards that had been badly frosted the year before generally produced a potentially large crop of high quality grapes. This was not true in every parcel however, as the temperatures at the time of flowering in 2017 were unseasonably warm, which led to a very rapid *floraison* and, as a result, some vineyards did not have as successful a budset as normal and *millerandage* caused croploads which were consequently less than in neighboring plots. The frosts the year before in 2016 had cut back the potential yields so severely that the vines in these parcels had a huge reserve of pent up energy to draw upon in 2017, which is the origin of this year's big crop. The last time prior to 2016 where there had been very bad frosts in Burgundy was all the way back in 1981, and the following vintage of 1982 is renowned for its huge crop of pretty, but rather dilute wines and only modest quality as a result. But, today's Burgundy is a far cry from 1982 and *vignerons* were, for the most part, quite vigilant about the potential dilution that could occur with such a large crop and took measures to not let the crop get out of control and end up dilute, as the easy-going and rather thin red wines of 1982 simply would not be saleable from the top domaines in the present day market. In the end, yields at most estates in the Côte d'Or ended up a bit larger than in 2009 (but not way out of control), and were a significant improvement from the previous year's miniscule *recolte*, so that the resulting wines generally have good to very good stuffing and mid-palate cores and are a far, far cry from those quite dilute wines from 1982. But, to truly understand the potential of the 2017 vintage in the Côte d'Or, one has to look back to the frost patterns of 2016, as not all villages suffered the same from the spring frosts of the previous vintage.

Recall that some villages were very, very fortunate in 2016 and missed almost all of the frost damage (primarily Morey St. Denis, Vosne-Romanée and Puligny-Montrachet- with the exception of the band of grand crus in Puligny, which were very badly-frosted in '16), and where there was no frost damage in 2016, there was not the same pent up energy reserves in the vines to produce potentially huge yields. Consequently, the crop size in these communes was generally average, and perhaps a bit lower than what these same lucky *vignerons* had realized in 2016. So, while the primary story of 2017 in the Côte d'Or is the large crop size, it is not true of every village and every vineyard. Beyond the issues of last year's frost, there was some isolated hail in the second week of July of 2017 that hit some vineyards in Morey and Gevrey, with the area around Clos de la Roche and the vineyards on the Morey-Gevrey border hit, which reduced yields more than quality. The next important climactic factor that featured heavily on the ultimate style and quality of the vintage of 2017 in the Côte d'Or occurred during the third week of August, as the region was hit with a torrid week of high temperatures, and while the heat spike lasted, sugar levels in the grapes soared. This is hardly ideal for *vignerons*, as they much prefer a very measured climb to final sugar levels, ideally coupled with cooler nights, to keep acid levels up while the sugars finish mounting. This did not happen in 2017, and because of this heatwave during the third week of August, producers had to start scrambling to get harvest plans accelerated and start bringing grapes in from the fields. Consequently, 2017 is yet again another early harvest, with the most vigilant white Burgundy producers (and those who really value cut, grip and mineral drive in their wines) were out picking before the end of August. Arnaud Ente started his white grape harvest on August 23rd with one parcel of young vines, and then took in everything else between the 26th and the 31st of the month and was finished before September arrived. Similarly, Domaine Roulot started early on August 27th, Antoine Jobard on the 28th and

Alexandre Moreau on August 30th. From my tasting of the white wines in the Côte d'Or this year, starting early was a prerequisite to attain wines with cut, mineral drive and good girdles of acidity. Those who got started a bit too late ended up with far more fruit-driven wines, often quite lower in acidity and with a bit higher alcohol and these estates missed a chance to make truly great white wines in 2017.

Having picked your chardonnay early was an advantage on another front as well, as this allowed one to miss having to sidestep a bit of rain during the picking for the pinot noir grapes, as there were two rainy days on the 9th and 10th of September. The rain was not extremely heavy, but it probably made sense for domaines to stop the picking teams during the wet weather and let the vineyards dry out just a bit before continuing the harvest. I got the sense from my cellar visits that the picking time was not quite as critical for the pinot noir as it obviously was for the chardonnay, but acidity levels had dropped during the heat spike on the backend of August and it was logical to try and get the grapes in relatively briskly, as there was more than enough sugar in the grapes after the hot temperatures and nothing was being gained leaving the grapes hanging longer into September. The Mugneret sisters at Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg started picking on September 4th and had everything in the cellar before the rain started on the 9th. Cécile Tremblay in Morey St. Denis started picking on the 5th of September. Domaine des Lambrays started bringing in their pinot noir even a few days earlier, picking first on September 2nd, and many other top Côte de Nuits estates starting between the 6th and 7th. Even traditionally late harvesters such as Domaine Alain Burguet and Domaine Ponsot were picking by the middle of the month of September (the Burguet family on the 11th and the Ponsots on the 15th), so everyone reacted to the heat wave in August by accelerating their expected start times for the harvest. However, one of the byproducts of the soaring sugars during that torrid third week of August was that the stems were not as ripe as has been the case in several recent vintages and, as a consequence, there was less use of whole clusters this year at several domaines I visited. Of course, ripeness of stems and seeds in the pinot noir were also tied intimately to the question of yields, as those who restricted yields with a green harvest earlier in the summer had better phenolic maturity already when the heat spike arrived and so had more flexibility when it came to using whole clusters in 2017.

One of the things that is quite apparent when one is dipping into the 2017s at a great number of domaines in the Côte d'Or is that controlling yields was a key to producing truly great red wines in this vintage. So for many top estates, who now have *négociant* licenses to buy in grapes to augment their own estate production, there can often be quite a difference between the style and ultimate quality of the wines produced from their own vineyards and those made from grapes that have been contracted for with neighbors. As Jeremy Seysses pointed out when we were tasting his *négociant* bottling of Chambolle-Musigny *villages*, “it would have been ideal if this grower had reduced his yields just a bit more in 2017, but I was not about to go ask someone who had produced only four hectoliters per hectare in 2016, because of frost damage, if he might do a green harvest for us in 2017; that was a conversation I was not prepared to have!” So, the heterogeneous style of the 2017s reds is not something that is exclusively determined by picking dates, green harvest or the previous year's frost damage, as it is self-evident that a grower in the Côte d'Or who primarily sells of his production to others to make *négociant* bottlings is not going to have the same incentive to rein in potential yields than is the case with someone who is going to estate bottle all of their own wines. This is particularly true if the *vigneron* selling his

grapes was in one of those villages the most adversely-affected by frost damage the previous year. So one can be in a cellar where the wines made from purchased grapes are rather open, fruity and charming, but without great depth or classic structures, whereas their wines from their own vineyards are deeper, sappier, more soil-driven and far more beautifully balanced for longer-term aging. This is not to say that the former category of wines are disappointing- far from it- but, that there are simply wines that are a very notable step up in terms of depth, *terroir* expression, vibrancy and tannic structures, where the potential vineyard vigor was kept in check.

Once the grapes were in the *cuvées* and fermentations were started for the 2017s, there were a few more variations to add to the heterogeneous nature of the vintage here in the Côte d'Or. One of these was the pace of malolactic fermentations, as some *vignerons* reported quite early completion of malos for their 2017s, other found the timing of their finishing up was quite "normal" and others had later malos for their wines. In general, I have been a fan of vintages since 1993 where the malos were a bit slower and finished later, but this is not a consistent thing, and within the context of the 2017 vintage, when the malo happened to finish is not necessarily a sign of the wine's ultimate quality, but rather, just another variation amongst wines and producers in this vintage. But, it was quite useful to know when a wine had finished up its malo when tasting in the cellars, just to get an idea of where the wine was in its evolution in barrel when tasting the wine in November. With Burgundy getting more and more popular in the global market, there seems to be more pressure on the trade to get to the Côte d'Or or Chablis earlier and earlier to taste the wines ahead of the competition. With the 2017 vintage, this was not necessarily a good thing, as with the hot summer and warm autumn conditions of 2018, most of the cellars I was visiting were only just starting to drop down in temperature to their customary late autumn levels, and the wines always seem to show their structure and depth much better once the cellar temps start to fall. Several of the most successful winegrowers commented that their 2017 wines were more easy-going structurally and not showing the same depth of fruit a few months earlier and they are now nicely putting on weight in cask, which is leading them to upgrade their estimate of the ultimate quality of the 2017s quite a bit. So, those really in a hurry to taste the 2017s and who were tasting in the region in October this year may have a very different perspective on the vintage than those tasting a bit later on in the year, as the wines were changing quite a bit over that period.

Staying with the 2017 red wines from the Côte d'Or, what then is the ultimate style and quality of the vintage? As I mentioned above, there are really two vintages rolled into one in 2017, with picking dates and size of yields playing quite a critical role in the final personalities of the wines from this year. Those made from rather higher yields are very pretty, suave and nicely fruit wines, which still show good signatures of underlying *terroir*, have moderate, silky tannins, respectable acidity and will drink very nicely from quite early ages. In style, they are not all that dissimilar to the very charming (and quite high quality) 2007s, which is a vintage that has delivered an awful lot of very enjoyable red Burgundies since it was released and which continues to drink very well indeed and still have many decades ahead of it. The 2017 reds from this camp seem to have more sappy fruit at their cores than the 2007s did at the same time, so they will probably end up even a bit better than that vintage a decade earlier. And these are the less successful 2017 reds! However, unlike the 2007 reds, there is also another level of quality to be found in 2017, with these wines truly stunning and destined to be ranked a generation down the road as one of the greatest groups of red wines to be made in the last twenty years. They were

produced from lower yields and consequently have far more inner stuffing and depth, while sharing the same great purity of sappy fruit, stellar *typicité* and seductive structures of their more easy-going counterparts made from higher yields. This latter and superior group of 2017 red Burgundies have substantially more structural sophistication and grip than the easy-going group, but the tannins are also very suave, fine-grained and almost silky in texture, so the structure of these wines may well be overlooked a bit in the temptation to drink this higher quality group of wines also in their relative youths. Today, the tannins of the best 2017s are substantially more refined in texture than the excellent 2016s in the same cellars, where one has a chance to compare the two vintages side by side. For this segment of the 2017 reds, they are a huge step up from the 2007s, and remember, I have been a very big fan of the '07s since day one.



The very best 2017 red Burgundies are destined to be great, great wines. Madame Rousseau at Domaine Charles Rousseau commented that maybe her “2017s are a bit like a cross between 2014 and 2016 vintages.” Others compare them to a combination of 2007 and 2010. You can see that I am far from alone in thinking extremely highly of the very top tier of 2017 reds! For much of the two and a half weeks I spent tasting the 2017s here in Burgundy, I have been trying to come up with a comparison of this lovely vintage to previously great vintages in the region. After a lot of reflection and tasting, I think that the very best 2017 reds from the Côte d’Or are going to resemble a hypothetical blend of the 1985 and 2005 vintages. I was fortunate to start my Burgundy career with the 1985s, so I remember very well the beautifully sappy,

accessible and still quite classically-grounded wines that showed marvelous *terroir* out of the blocks to go along with the most beautiful pinot noir fruit I had ever tasted up to that point in my career. The very top 2017 reds share this same combination of gorgeous and very pure fruit, excellent *typicité* and suave structural chassis that very much recall many of the most beautiful attributes of the 1985s. And like the 1985 vintage, the acidity levels on the 2017s are not particularly high, so like that former vintage, even the top wines are likely to offer great appeal early on and be hard to resist drinking in their youths. But the very best 2017s are also deeper, sappier and more serious than the top 1985s, with a combination of really superb depth of fruit a very frequent sensation of “raw cocoa” from the superb growing season, which is found both on the nose and palate of many wines, and which very much recalls the 2005s. Of course, the 2017s are not as powerful or tannic as the 2005s, nor are they anywhere near as high in acidity, but if one can picture the combination of the structural accessibility and early flamboyance of the 1985s (or have heard about it, if you are not as old as I am!), coupled with the sappier and far superior density of fruit and this lovely raw cocoa element, tied in with very precise and classical minerality of each individual *terroir*, then one can start to get a feel for the just how good the very best 2017 red Burgundies are going to be. For those who bought heavily on the 2005s (for many contemporary Burgundy collectors, this was their very first vintage to buy in depth) and getting impatient waiting for them to start to blossom a bit from behind their serious chassis of tannin and acidity, the 2017s are going to be the perfect foil, as they share several similarities with the 2005s in terms of aromatics and flavors, but are nowhere near as forbiddingly structured and many are likely to drink beautifully from day one.

The 2017 reds were generally fairly early in starting and completing their malolactic fermentations, though this was far from universal. But, for a majority of examples from the vintage, the malos finished up anywhere from February to the start of April, and it was pretty rare for any wines to have lagged behind this, though there were exceptions. Charles van Canneyt of Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat likes later malos for his wines and has quite a cold cellar, so his malos were fairly late to finish (particularly in the context of the 2017s) and the wines were several weeks behind his neighbors in terms of evolution in cask as a result. Elodie Michelot also had a few cuvées that lagged behind in their malos than most of the cellar this year. As I mentioned above, 2017 is not a particularly high acid vintage in any case, but after malos, the wines have retained pretty sound acidity and do not lack for freshness or bounce. But, like the 1985s, it is generally a low acid vintage that suggests that early drinking will be richly rewarded with the 2017s, as they are unlikely to close down dramatically after bottling, as is so often the case with higher acid vintages. With another early harvest and early malos in general as well, the 2017 vintage is likely to be bottled on the early side and many estates were already preparing wines for bottling early in the new year. Simpler wines such as Bourgogne *rouge* or *blanc* were often already bottled, though this is not particularly exceptional in November, but most estates will choose an accelerated bottling schedule as well for all of their top wines to preserve the simply beautiful balance and purity of sappy fruit now resplendently presented in so many 2017s. While the gorgeous fruit will take center stage when these wines eventually ship, this is a vintage that is also firmly based in its *terroir* and it is another of those beautiful years where great purity of fruit harmonizes with classic mineral *typicité* and each and every vineyard sings its own praises.

Which leads us to the question of white wines in the Côte d'Or in 2017. Like their red wine counterparts in this sector of Burgundy, the 2017 vintage is certainly quite heterogeneous in style, with picking dates and crop sizes often the determining factors in whether one produced plump, fruity and very friendly white Burgundies for early consumption or something more minerally-infused, racier and altogether more serious. With the heat spike arriving on the back half of August, not every domaine was in position to accelerate plans for harvest in the wake of the quickly mounting sugar levels and so not everyone had the capacity to get out in the vines as early as Arnaud Ente and his picking team to gather the bunches at their optimal moment. The size of the domaine was also a key consideration in this respect, as if one is a big estate fortunate enough to have a wide palette of vineyard sites, one had to pick and choose where to start harvesting and when. The heat wave sent sugars soaring up to picking levels very briskly and it was rather uniform in its application, so even the traditionally cooler sites (such as in Auxey-Duresses) arrived at full ripeness very promptly during the heat spike and if a *vigneron* had a lot of different vineyards to pick, then one had to select where to start. Everyone raced to bring in their chardonnay very quickly after the torrid temperatures, as even a few days difference could make quite a difference stylistically in the resulting wines. Those who picked earliest got wines with really impressive underlying minerality, racy structural chassis of fine acidity and the cut, grip and length of a great vintage. Those who were a little later out of the blocks ended up with wines that were more buxom, fruit-driven and lower in acidity, with a bit higher alcohol levels (though still not particularly high- for those wines we will have to wait until the 2018s come along), wide open structures and without the same racy and mineral-driven backends of the finest wines of the vintage.

As is the case with the “good, but not great” category of red wines of 2017, the later-picked white wines of this vintage are still very, very good wines, with the plush, charming and pure fruit tones of a top vintage, perfectly respectable signatures of soil and solid framing acids to give the wines early lift and bounce on the backend. They are very charming and tasty wines and will hardly disappoint most fans of white Burgundy, but as is the case with the reds of 2017, there is also another category of wines that are another level up in quality. The latter wines are stunningly beautiful, with utterly classic expressions of minerality, perfectly ripe and pure fruit expressions and a harness of acidity that gives the wines marvelous palate tension on the backends. As I mentioned above, these white wines very much recall the finest 2014s, with perhaps even better mid-palate stuffing. They are truly brilliant wines of enormous potential, but I suspect that they will likely close down a bit behind their girdles of excellent acidity once they are bottled and require at least a few years in the cellar to blossom properly- during which time we can avail ourselves to the considerable charms of the slightly later-picked wines and really enjoy them for their open-knit, beautifully fruit-driven personalities. Alcohol levels very a bit between the two camps of 2017 white Burgundies, with the earlier-picked, racy wines generally between 12.5 and thirteen percent, while those that were picked a bit later tend to be more in the 13.5 percent octane level.

As I mentioned above, in the context of discussing the variations of style and quality of the 2017 red wines in the Côte d'Or, one of the key components of potential quality for the white wines of this vintage can be found in the frost patterns of the previous year. Where frost damage was most severe in 2016, as was the case in Chassagne-Montrachet, the belt of grand cru vineyards in Puligny-Montrachet, certain sectors in Meursault and the Pernand side of the hill of

Corton, there was enormous pent up energy in the vines in 2017 and one had to be judicious in limiting potential crop yields in the following vintage to ensure that the wines would not have a bit of dilution from large yields. Given the extensive losses for many *vignerons* in 2016 from frost damage, it is understandable that some producers would be more resolute in controlling yields than others would be, as there had not really been a large crop in the Côte d'Or since 2009, and all of the following years had been the products of limited crop sizes, with the exception of 2011. So, producers in the Côte de Beaune had been struggling without a full crop for most of the last decade and given the chance to produce a generous amount of wine in certain vineyards in 2017, some chose to let nature deliver a bit more bounty after the depredations of 2016's frost damage. Others, knowing that the ultimate quality of their wines in 2017 would be very much tied to how much they limited their potential crop size were better at de-budding in the spring or green harvesting where necessary to not over-crop and their wines are often a step up in quality as a result.



One of the interesting facets of this situation was the style and quality of the white grand crus of 2017, as these vineyards were the most heavily-frost damaged in the village of Puligny-Montrachet in 2016. Domaines fortunate enough to have parcels in Bâtard-Montrachet, Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet, Chevalier-Montrachet, Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet and Montrachet itself often were faced with little, or even no wine in the wake of the frosts of 2016. Recall that the frost damage was so bad for some that seven domaines (including DRC, Domaine

Leflaive and Comtes Lafon) with parcels in the Chassagne side of Montrachet pooled their bunches together to make one small, combined cuvée from this vineyard in 2016, which will be auctioned off for charity. The damage in the neighboring grand crus was often almost as bad in 2016, so the more generous potential crop size in the grand crus in 2017 was a most welcome possibility for some producers. Keep in mind that it is not just the domaines wishing to have the profit flow of grand crus in 2017, after the extreme shortage of such bottles from the 2016 vintage, but also customer demand for grand crus that also drives the decision making process, as allocations had to have been extremely difficult for many producers with such a shortage of grand crus in 2016. And a domaine's very best customers are often those well-heeled enough to be wishing to buy grand crus. So, there was already some institutional pressure on *vignerons* with holdings in the grand crus of Puligny and Chassagne to make more wine in 2017, prior to the time when decisions had to be made about how much to dial back potential yields here in this vintage. I am not saying that this was specifically the case, but certainly there was pent up demand for grand cru whites from 2017 from clients shorted the previous year (or years), and this pent up demand was certainly the equal to the pent up energy in the vines.

Another consideration to be taken into account when assessing the style of the 2017 grand crus from the Côte de Beaune had to do with the age of the vines in these parcels. While I do not have any precise information on this count, I have to believe that those with vines in these top grand crus often will have older vines planted here than in their premier and *villages* level parcels, as there is a likelihood of domaines not wishing to replant parcels of old vines in the grand crus. Recall how long Michel Niellon resisted replanting his ancient vines in Bâtard-Montrachet, despite their being diseased and very feeble in terms of production for decades, as he simply did not want to lose the magical synthesis of his very old vines and the *terroir* of Bâtard-Montrachet. I have to believe that this mentality is far from rare amongst his neighbors in the grand crus. The oldest vines around the Côte d'Or in 2017 sometimes had more difficulty bouncing back from the punishing frosts of 2016, and several producers with very old vines did mention that it was not really until the 2018 growing season that they felt their oldest vines were back to normal after the frosts of 2016. So, some of the oldest vine parcels scattered around the Côte de Beaune were still not fully recovered from the frost damage of 2016 during the growing season of 2017. No one mentioned this factor in discussing specifically the style and quality of their white grand crus in 2017, but I was struck by how in several cellars of very good producers, there was not the customary step up in quality from the top premier crus to the grand cru white wines in this vintage. It may well prove that, though there are some truly lovely grand cru whites from the most successful estates in 2017, the vintage will eventually be seen as even better for the very best premier crus in the Côte de Beaune, with the frost damage of 2016 taking just a little something away from the grand crus in the following vintage.

In any case, whatever might be the underlying reason or reasons, I did feel in several cellars that the most successful white wines in the Côte de Beaune were at the premier cru level in 2017, and while the following grand crus in some of these cellars were also very, very good, they did not show quite the same precision, depth of fruit, mineral drive and structural electricity of the very top premier crus that had preceded them in the tastings. One, of course, has to temper these observations within the context of the relative merits of the premier and grand crus in a particular lineup, as probably on some detached level, there might be a bit more inherent complexity in some of the grand crus that I would term as having underperformed *vis à vis* the

beautiful premier crus that had been served ahead of them, but let us at least note that there was not the typical step up in quality level from top premier cru to grand cru in several cellars in 2017. I have speculated a bit on why this might have been so (and perhaps, this was just a stage of relative development in cask of the respective wines), but there was a frequency to this pattern in enough cellars during my two and a half weeks of tastings in the Côte d'Or to come to the conclusion that this may well be a pattern of the vintage, rather than just the luck of the draw regarding how the wines were showing at the time of my visits. Keep in mind also that top *vignerons* are going to be most likely to pick their grand cru parcels at what they consider their optimum moments, prioritizing them over their premier crus, so it is far from likely that the timing of picking of the grand crus would have been less spot on than was the case for premier crus in the same cellar, and for this reason, I have to conclude that the pattern I came across with some frequency of the relative merits of premier and grand cru whites in the Côte de Beaune is truly a reflection of the vintage, rather than just random chance. This is not to say that there are not some truly magical white grand crus to be found in the 2017 vintage, but rather, that the strength of the white wine vintage in the Côte de Beaune may well lie in the very top premier crus this year and there are likely to be a far wider range of options for true greatness at the premier cru level in 2017.

Chablis

While the *Chablisienne* were not as fortunate as their colleagues in the Côte d'Or in 2017 and realized again, substantial frost damage, the frost of 2016 was quite different from that of 2017. Much of the damage from the freeze of April of 2016 was on the Left Bank, where many of the top estates have substantial holdings at the *villages* level or in Petit Chablis, in addition to the two major bands of premier crus on that side of the Yonne River. So, for example, Guillaume Michel of Domaine Louis Michel noted that “we have fully two hectares of *villages* level vineyards on the *Rive Gauche* that were completely wiped out and had virtually no production from the frost in 2016, but which were barely touched in 2017.” In contrast, the April frost of 2017 hit far harder the Right Bank vineyards, which is where the grand crus are located and many of the top premier crus, so vineyards like Montée de Tonnerre and the grand crus were struck far worse by frost in 2017 than was the case the year previous. Isabelle Raveneau noted that “our parcel in Valmur was very badly frosted and we lost two-thirds of a normal crop there in 2017, and Montée de Tonnerre was also very badly hit, but the others were not too bad.” She continued, “by not too bad, I mean they were down only about twenty-five percent or so, which is much better than losing two-thirds.” Across the Yonne, on the *Rive Gauche*, the two ridges that house the premier crus of Vaillons, Séchet, Forest, Butteaux and the like were less affected by the frost this year, so yields are much better in these vineyards and the wines are more classically structured as a result. And the frost of 2017 was not just a single night, but several very cold nights back to back to back, so that temperatures hovered right around freezing or just below in the coldest part of each night, just before dawn, and the accumulated damage from these very cold temperatures affected yields further, as many of the buds that survived the coldest first night eventually succumbed to the repeatedly cold evening temps.

As Guillaume Michel explained, it was not just the problem of the frost in 2017, but that it struck many vineyards that are usually not frost-prone in Chablis and so there were no protective measures in place to try to minimize the damage from the freeze. He noted that “in the places where we are used to getting frost traditionally, we have heating systems in place that we

frequently use to battle the frost, so that in these parcels- for example- at the bottom of Grenouilles, where it often frosts, we have measures we can use against it.” However, as he noted, “in 2017, when our frost alarms went off, we got up and went to the usual spots in the vineyards that more often freeze and turned on the heaters, or some neighbors burned hay bales, but when the morning light came up, we discovered that the frost had hit a lot of vineyards and parcels that do not usually freeze and our efforts had not always been concentrated in the correct places.” So, in the aftermath of the frosts of 2017, the *Chablisienne* were once again faced with yet another very short crop in 2017, and with the premier and grand crus disproportionately affected this year, the frost hurt even more economically than in 2016, when more *villages* level parcels of vines were frozen. Happily, the 2018 growing season was not one where frost played a role, so at least the yields in the coming vintage will help compensate a bit for two back to back very badly frost-affected vintages and very short yields.



Autumn colors in the grapevines growing along the walls in the courtyard of the Hostellerie des Clos in Chablis.

After the serious speed bump with the frosts at the end of April of 2017, the remainder of the growing season was quite pleasant and the grapes ripened nicely in the sunny and warm, but not overly hot weather of 2017. This is in notable contrast to the vintages on either side of 2017, as in 2016 the growing season was marked by constant battles against mildew and rot and it was far from an ideal summer, after the frosts. In contrast, the 2018 vintage in Chablis was very hot all summer long and marked by significant hydric stress, so it too was a quite complicated summer. But, at least in 2017, the growing season was easy and excellent after the frost damage. As was the case further south in the Côte d’Or, there was a heat spike in the third week of

August in Chablis as well, which pushed the sugars up towards harvesting levels and growers accelerated their plans for the harvest a bit and started picking in early September. The Raveneau family started picking on September 5th, Didier Seguer at Domaine William Fèvre on the fourth of the month, and Patrick Piuze on September 2nd. The harvest had a bit of rain on the weekend of the 9th and 10th of September in 2017, and though it did not dilute the good sugar levels in the grapes, it seems to have affected the acidity levels in the finished wines, so that there is more cut and structural tension in wines made from grapes harvested before the weekend rain, in comparison to those from vineyards picked after the weekend's rain. The latter have lovely and quite generous fruit tones and solid expressions of *terroir*, but not the same mineral drive and classical structures for longer-term aging as is found in wines made from grapes brought in before that rainy weekend in September.

There is also a variation in the wines of 2017 in Chablis from vineyards that were very badly frosted this year and those which were far less affected in April. The wines made from tiny yields caused by the frost do not seem to have the same mineral precision and backend bounce and drive as those made in vineyards less touched by the frost, so there is a stylistic variation between 2017s made in vineyards down twenty or thirty percent because of frost and those that are down by fifty or sixty percent (or more). The worst frosted-vineyards have produced wines of impressive concentration and depth of fruit, but at least at the time of my November visit to the cellars in the region, these wines were quite a bit more monolithic in personality and far less expressive and vibrant. It may just be a passing stage for those wines, which will eventually catch up with the others in the cellar less devastated by the frosts, or it may be that they never match the same focused minerality and vibrant personalities of wines made from less damaged vineyards. Time will tell on that score. So it is not a homogenous vintage in Chablis in 2017, as not only are there the differences between the wines made from grapes picked before and after the rainy weekend of the ninth and tenth of September, but also stylistic differences between the wines from the most severely-frosted vineyards and those hit less hard.

But, that said, 2017 is a very, very good vintage in Chablis, and for the most favored vineyard parcels, picked before the rain, it is absolutely brilliant. The beautiful growing season between the frosts at the end of April and the start of harvest allowed for excellent ripeness, and until the rains came during the middle of the picking, it also allowed for excellent acidity. So the best wines have the very pure and deep fruit tones of a “solar vintage”, coupled with outstanding *typicité* and minerality, racy and seamless girdles of acidity and the potential to be the best vintage of Chablis since the exceptional 2014s. And while it is too early to project with any certainty how the more hunkered down, adolescent wines in the cellars made from the most heavily-frosted vineyards will evolve, the wines made from grapes picked after the rainy weekend are not bad at all, with joyous, buxom and still very fresh fruit tones, sound signatures of *terroir* and good framing acids that give the wines bounce and lift, but promise their best days in their relative youths. They are not great wines, like those from parcels picked before the rain, but they are very good, as the rain was not heavy enough to dilute the really lovely depth of fruit of 2017, just steal a bit of cut and structural grip for the long haul. I am not sure of where the percentages might fall of each category of Chablis in 2017, as I only had time on this trip to taste at five of my favorite domaines in the region and will be back in the spring for more tasting on the Yonne, but there are certainly going to be a quite significant number of truly great bottlings produced in 2017. As Didier Seguin of Domaine William Fèvre observed, “the 2017s are truly a

great vintage for true connoisseurs and collectors of Chablis, who love classic *Chablisienne* minerality, raciness and great purity of fruit.”

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 malo 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 2017 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 2017 vintage.

Chablis

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat (Chablis)

Vincent Dauvissat has absolutely captured the full potential of the vintage in Chablis in 2017 and his range of wines is simply stunning. Though his domaine is listed first here in the notes on Chablis, the Dauvissat cellars were actually my last stop in Chablis on this trip and I had the pleasure to contemplate this brilliant range of wines for an hour and a half as I drove back down to Beaune to be back in the Côte d’Or for the next morning’s round of tastings. I did not come to any conclusion about where I would rank Monsieur Dauvissat’s 2017s amongst his other great, great vintages (and there have been many of these over the course of Vincent’s career!), but they will have to be eventually placed right up near the top. The domaine’s team began harvesting in 2017 on September 6th, and Vincent reported that the lower section of his vines in la Forest and his vines in les Clos were the most severely frost-damaged in this vintage. Overall, he lost thirty percent of a “normal” crop due to the frosts, but was quite happy with the resulting quality of the wines. The domaine had lost a larger percentage of their yields to frost in the previous year’s freeze in April of 2016. Due to the short yields of 2017, there was no new oak used at all in the Dauvissat cellars for the wines in this vintage. At the time of my visit on the 13th of November, both the Montée de Tonnerre and Vaillons had just been racked (that morning) and were not in any condition to be tasted. But, the rest of the lineup was absolutely stellar and amongst the very best white wines that I tasted from Burgundy in 2017. The Petit Chablis had been bottled in August of 2018 and the Chablis AC had been bottled in mid-October, but the other wines were either just in the process of being assembled in tank for winter (such as the Montée de Tonnerre and Vaillons) or still in cask, and everything that I tasted was showing beautifully. Monsieur Dauvissat was very generous to share a bit of history with us after the tasting, as he had an open bottle of 1921 Vaudésir from an unknown producer, that he had bought out of an old cellar. He thought it was probably from Domaine Louis Pinson in this era,

but the label was long gone and there was no branding on the cork, so we had to content ourselves with drinking this beautiful bottle of still quite vibrant old Chablis, without knowing with any certainty who had actually made the wine back in this era. Needless to say, I did not spit the 1921 and kept savoring the finish for much of the drive back down to Beaune!

2017 Petit Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Monsieur Dauvissat makes a terrific example of Petit Chablis and his 2017 is another excellent wine. The bouquet shows off impressive depth and complexity for its level, wafting from the glass in a mix of lemon, grapefruit, chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nicely racy, with a very good core of fruit, fine mineral signature and a long, bouncy and beautifully focused finish. This is a lovely, lovely wine. 2018-2030+. **88.**

2017 Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2017 Domaine Dauvissat Chablis *villages* was showing very well for only being one month out from the bottling, but it may turn out that I have underrated this wine a touch and it will prove to be even better than my note suggests! The bouquet is lovely, offering up scents of tart orange, apple, chalky minerality, spring flowers and a nice touch of lemon peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with bright, zesty acids, superb backend mineral drive and a very long, nicely balanced and nascently complex finish. This has more core than the Petit Chablis and more inherent complexity. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Monsieur Dauvissat’s 2017 Séchet is simply superb and underscores just how brilliant this vintage is for the domaine. The bouquet is pure, focused and already very expressive, offering up a classic blend of pink grapefruit, apple, citrus peel, limestone minerality, beeswax and white lilies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and marvelously racy out of the blocks, with a rock solid core, exceptional transparency, laser-like focus and a very long, saline finish. This is one of the finest young vintages of Séchet I have ever tasted *chez* Dauvissat! 2021-2055. **93.**

2017 Chablis “la Forest”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

It was the lower portion of the slope in la Forest that was frosted in Monsieur Dauvissat’s holdings in this excellent premier cru, but the wine does not show any of the overly concentrated aspects that certain 2017s from frosted-vineyards show in this vintage. Rather, the wine is very pure, precise and classical in profile and an absolutely beautiful wine in the making. The bouquet soars from the glass in a lovely combination of green apple, grapefruit, flinty minerality, dried flowers, just a whisper of vanillin oak and a youthful topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full and nicely reserved in personality, with outstanding mid-palate depth, excellent mineral drive, snappy acids and impeccable balance on the very long and nascently complex finish. A great vintage of la Forest. 2023-2060. **94.**

2017 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

There was just a touch of frost damage in the domaine’s holdings in les Preuses in 2017, so the yields here were down by ten percent. The wine is brilliant, offering up a deep and enormously complex nose of grapefruit, tart pear, green apple, a kaleidoscopic base of chalky and oyster shell minerality, orange peel, a whisper of vanillin oak and an exotic, savory topnote that is redolent of fresh tarragon! On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, racy and absolutely rock solid at the core, with great detail and complexity. The finish is very, very long, youthfully

reserved and vibrant, with laser-like focus and great grip. A magical les Preuses in the making, but give it some time in the cellar to really blossom. 2026-2075. 97+.

2017 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2017 les Clos from the Dauvissat family, like the la Forest, does not show any out of the ordinary concentration from its frost-limited yields and is again, an utterly classical expression of this great *terroir*. The wine delivers great complexity and breed in its aromatic constellation of pink grapefruit, lemon, pear, flinty minerality, citrus peel, salty overtones and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with a great core, stunning mineral drive, racy acids and impeccable cut and balance on the very, very long and complex finish. Brilliant juice. 2027-2075. 97+.



A very happy Vincent Dauvissat in his cellars in the center of Chablis.

Domaine Drouhin Vaudon (Chablis)

As is customary in November, I tasted this range of 2017 Chablis bottlings from the Drouhin family's Drouhin Vaudon estate as part of our press group tasting of the 2017 vintage in the domaine's cellars in Beaune. The Réserve de Vaudon and the premier crus had all been bottled in mid-June of 2018 and the Les Clos a month later in mid-July. Due to the frost damage in the region in 2017, the team at Joseph Drouhin understandably did not choose to show the full range of their Chablis cuvées this year. As was the case with all other producers in the region, the Drouhin Vaudon parcels in the grand crus were the most severely affected by the frost

damage (along with their small plot in Montée de Tonnerre, which they blend into a Premier Cru cuvée, as they do not have a large enough parcel to bottle on its own), with, for example, their Les Clos fully fifty percent down due to the end of April freeze in 2017.

2017 Chablis “Réserve de Vaudon”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2017 Réserve de Vaudon from the Drouhin family is quite a lovely wine for drinking over the relative near-term, as it is open-knit and already quite generous on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine mix of green apple, tart orange, chalky minerality, a touch of crab apple and a topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and nicely balanced, with a good core of fruit, fine cut and grip and a long, complex and already quite delicious finish. This is a lovely *villages* for drinking over the next dozen years or so. 2018-2030. **90.**

2017 Chablis “Sécher”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

This is the first time I have noted the spelling of Sécher for this Left Bank premier cru, which is usually spelled as Séchet. Perhaps I have just been inattentive in the past. In any case, this is far more reserved in personality today than the lovely Réserve de Vaudon, offering up a youthful and still quite primary bouquet of lemon, grapefruit, chalky soil tones, white lilies and orange peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and still fairly closed (which is a very good sign in 2017), with a fine core, lovely soil signature, bright, vibrant acids and very good cut and grip on the focused and well-balanced finish. This needs a couple of years to blossom, but will be a fine bottle. 2020-2040. **91+.**

2017 Chablis “Mont de Milieu”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

Mont de Milieu is on the Right Bank in Chablis and this sector was far more severely hit by the late April frosts than was the case across the Yonne, so yields here are decidedly lower than was the case with the estate’s Sécher, Montmains or Vaillons. The wine is more forward out of the blocks in 2017 than the Sécher, offering up a precise and inviting bouquet of lemon, green apple, limestone soil tones, spring flowers and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a bright, but easy-going structural chassis, fine mid-palate depth and a long, bouncy and complex finish. This is already very tasty, but seems to have the balance to age quite well, despite not being particularly steely in terms of acidity. 2018-2040. **91.**

2017 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2017 Chablis “Les Clos” from Domaine Drouhin Vaudon shows quite a bit of ripeness on the nose this year, wafting from the glass in a complex aromatic mix of tangerine, apple, citrus peel, flinty minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a rock solid core, excellent focus and grip, very impressive acidity and a very long, juicy and vibrant finish. This is very tasty and will only need a couple of years in the cellar to fully blossom and reveal its secondary layers of complexity. 2020-2040. **92+.**

Domaine William Fèvre (Chablis)

Didier Séguier and his team at Domaine William Fèvre were out early in the vines in 2017, starting picking on September 4th and had brought in nearly everything prior to the rainy weather arriving on the weekend of the ninth and 10th. The pickers paused during the rain and brought in the last few parcels of grapes here on the 11th of September. The fermentations were quite normal in duration for the 2017 wines here, with prompt alcoholic fermentation and most

malos completed by the end of January of 2018. The wines were in their typical stage of development at the time of my mid-November visit this year, with the Petit Chablis, both Villages level cuvées bottled between the end of May and the first week of June, the premier crus of Beauroy, Montmains, Vaillons and Les Lys already assembled and due for bottling just after my visit, so the wines had been filtered already, and everything else assembled in tank, but not yet in preparation for bottling and still showing generously. Monsieur Séguier is very, very happy with the quality of the vintage of 2017, which he calls “a true connoisseur of Chablis vintage”, as the wines just exude typicité and racy mineral drive. As he noted, “the only downside with the vintage are the yields, as there is not a lot of wine from many of the vineyards.” Amongst the grand cru holdings of the domaine, their parcels in Vaudésir were the least frosted in 2017, so the yields here were around twenty-eight hectoliters per hectare. All the other grand crus were under twenty-two hectoliters per hectare, with the Valmur the most hard hit by the freeze and yields were a miniscule fifteen hectoliters per hectare here! The only wines that were a bit challenging to get a precise read on in the Domaine Fèvre 2017 lineup were the four premier crus that had been filtered the day before my visit, so I have scored those wines within a range, but would fully expect them to eventually track to the top number in their respective ranges- at least based on the brilliant quality of the other 2017s in the cellar here! Amongst the grand crus, only the heavily-frosted Valmur was out of sorts at the time of my visit, with all the rest absolutely stunning and showing enormous potential.

2017 Petit Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

The Domaine Fèvre 2017 Petit Chablis was showing very well at the time of my visit. The nose is bright and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of green apple, sweet grapefruit, chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely succulent on the attack, with good mid-palate depth and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Like several other top examples of Petit Chablis that I tasted during my visit, there is a bit more mid-palate amplitude in this bottling in 2017, probably due to the pent up energy caused by the extensive frost damage here the year before. Good juice and a fine value. 2018-2030. **88.**

2017 Chablis “Champs Royaux”- Maison William Fèvre

The 2017 Champs Royaux bottling is a fine example as well in this vintage, offering up a bright and inviting bouquet of lemon, green apple, oyster shell, chalk, citrus peel and a nice topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and very mineral in personality (particularly for this cuvée), with excellent focus and grip, snappy acids and a long, poised and racy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2035. **89+.**

2017 Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

The domaine bottling of Chablis AC is also excellent in 2017, with more precision and refinement than in the *négociant* bottling of Champs Royaux. The nose delivers a fine constellation of green apple, lemon, chalky minerality, orange peel, a bit of beeswax and a lovely floral topnote redolent of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is bright, full and focused, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent cut and grip and a long, seamless and impressively complex finish. This is a very good AC. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Beauroy”- Domaine William Fèvre

The Domaine Fèvre 2017 Beauroy was a bit hunkered down after its filtering the day before, but the constituent components here are very strong and I am sure this will be a lovely bottle in due course. The nose eventually shows facets of tart orange, green apple, flinty

minerality, citrus peel, a touch of straw and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, mineral and rock solid at the core, with fine focus, cut and grip on the long finish. This will want a few years to unwind and will be very good indeed. 2020-2045+. **90-91.**

2017 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2017 Montmains has also just been filtered, but was showing a bit more refinement at the time of my visit on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is going to be very pretty, as the nose offers up scents of lime, pear, spring flowers, chalky soil tones and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused, long and precise, with a good core, lovely transparency, bright, racy acids and fine grip on the bright and promising finish. 2018-2045. **91-92.**

2017 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine William Fèvre

Vaillons is a Left Bank premier cru and the frost damage on this side of the river was far less, so I have to imagine that this is one of the star premier crus in the cellar at Domaine Fèvre in 2017, but as the wine was just filtered, I have again scored it in a range. The nose here has first class components, with scents of pear, apple, lemon zest, a touch of beeswax, lovely, limestone minerality and white flowers all wafting from the glass. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and rock solid at the core, with vibrant acidity, excellent focus and grip and a very long, promising finish. My score could well end up being a tad conservative! 2018-2045+. **91-92+.**



Didier Séguier, Cellar Master at Domaine William Fèvre made a simply stellar range of 2017s.

2017 Chablis “Les Lys”- Domaine William Fèvre

I was sorry to catch the Les Lys bottling here just having been filtered, as this is my favorite example of this lovely premier cru in the whole region. The 2017 shows lovely constituent components, with the nose delivering a mix of lime, green apple, flinty minerality, orange peel and a nice touch of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with a good core, excellent cut and grip and a long, promising and absolutely classic finish. I love the balance here. 2020-2045+. **92-93.**

2017 Chablis “Mont de Milieu”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2017 Mont de Milieu from Domaine William Fèvre was the first premier cru in the tasting that had not just been filtered, so it served as a beautiful signpost for how the previous four wines will show once they have a chance to recover a bit, and this wine was showing beautifully! The bouquet delivers a lovely blend of pear, lemon, chalky soil tones and plenty of spring flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a beautiful synthesis of perfectly ripe fruit and racy minerality. The finish is focused, bright and bouncy, with excellent nascent complexity and a nice sense of reserve that augurs very, very well for its evolution in bottle. 2020-2045+. **92+.**

2017 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine William Fèvre

As the vineyard of Montée de Tonnerre was one of the most-affected premier crus by the April frosts, I was worried this wine might show as a bit of an outlier stylistically in the lineup, but the wine was racy and absolutely classical in profile. The bouquet is very precise and complex, soaring from the glass in a fine blaze of pear, lime, kaleidoscopic limestone minerality, white flowers, citrus zest and a nice topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and properly reserved structurally, with a rock solid core, great mineral drive, bright, snappy acids and laser-like focus on the very long and very electric finish. This is an outstanding bottle of Montée de Tonnerre in the making. 2022-2050. **93+.**

2017 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine William Fèvre

Vaulorent again was a premier cru that was frosted quite severely in 2017, but the Domaine William Fèvre version was showing a classical profile and no signs of out of the ordinary concentration from the frost. The bouquet is deep, complex and grand cru quality, as it delivers scents of lime, apple, pear, chalky and flinty minerality, dried flowers and a youthful topnote of lime peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sports beautiful mid-palate depth, with great cut and grip, excellent balance and a very, very long and vibrant finish. 2022-2050. **94.**

2017 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine William Fèvre

Bougros is often a bit generous and blousy in style for my tastes (or at least for my perceptions of how a proper young grand cru Chablis should present itself!), but the 2017 from William Fèvre has all of the cut, sizzle and reserve I could ever hope for! The bouquet is pure, complex and very classy, offering up scents of pear, lime blossoms, a complex base of chalky minerality and a nice touch of youthful smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, precise and very, very mineral in profile, with a superb core of fruit, great focus and balance, snappy acids and a long, laser-like and nascently complex finish. A truly great example of Bougros. 2023-2060. **95.**

2017 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2017 Chablis “Vaudésir” from Domaine William Fèvre is also outstanding on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a superb mix of pear, a touch of tangerine, apple, oyster shell, chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the

wine is pure, full-bodied, bright and beautifully proportioned, with excellent depth at the core, racy acids and lovely backend tension and grip on the very long finish. Another truly stellar grand cru from Didier and his team! 2023-2060. **95**.

2017 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine William Fèvre

Like other examples of Valmur I tasted from the 2017 vintage, the Domaine Fèvre bottling was closed down for business at the time of my visit and its ultimate stylistic guise and quality were not all that easy to read. The bouquet is quite reserved out of the blocks, offering up scents of apple, pear, beeswax, chalky soil tones and a whisper of florals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, closed and rock solid at the core, with excellent length and grip, but not a lot of detail showing in the still very adolescent finish. There are some very good pieces here, but the wine is not showing a lot at the present time. 2025-2065. **93-94+**.

2017 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine William Fèvre

In contrast to the hunkered down Valmur, the very young 2017 les Preuses from Domaine Fèvre was showing every last detail in its correct place and its ultimate quality was very, very easy to ascertain. This is properly reserved on both the nose and palate, but in the way an absolutely classic example of les Preuses would be at this early date. The bouquet is a beautiful blend of lemon, pear, apple, kaleidoscopic, chalky minerality, white flowers and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full and beautifully balanced, with a lovely core of fruit, great mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and impeccable focus and grip on the very long, nascently complex and utterly refined finish. Great juice. 2025-2065. **95+**.

2017 Chablis “Bougros- Côte de Bouguerots”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2017 Côte de Bouguerots is also a brilliant example of the vintage. The nose is refined and vibrant, jumping from the glass in a complex blend of pear, fresh lime, a touch of white peach, complex, chalky minerality, white lilies, beeswax and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, racy and deep at the core, with laser-like focus, great length and grip and a beautifully soil-defined and elegant finish. This has cut, purity of fruit and mineral drive to burn. 2025-2065+. **96**.

2017 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine William Fèvre

The Domaine Fèvre les Clos is another brilliant 2017 grand cru. The bouquet is utterly refined and classically complex, offering up scents of green apple, tart orange, lemon, complex, flinty minerality, white flowers and incipient notes of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, rock solid at the core and utterly suave in profile, with excellent, racy acids, superb focus and grip and a very long, very pure and complex finish. Great juice. 2025-2065. **96**.

Domaine Louis Michel (Chablis)

Guillaume Michel was in an upbeat mood when I stopped in to taste in the cellars here in the center of Chablis, right around the corner from the Mayor’s offices. No doubt, a properly full cellar of 2018s helped a bit, after the very short crops here in back to back years in 2016 and 2017. Domaine Louis Michel lost fifty percent of a normal crop from the frost damage of 2017, and as Guillaume noted above, it was there premier and grand cru parcels that were hit harder in this vintage than in 2016, so the economic impact will be even greater from the lost production in 2017. Amongst the premier crus here, Butteaux did the best, as it was “only” down around twenty-five percent from frost damage, while Forêts and Montmains lost a bit more of their crop and the domaine’s parcel in Montée de Tonnerre was the worst hit, with sixty percent of the crop lost to the freeze. In the grand crus, the frost damage varied a bit, as the domaine’s

parcels in Vaudésir are on the north face of the vineyard and were a bit more sheltered, so the frost only took twenty to twenty-five percent of the potential crop. In Domaine Michel's holdings in les Clos and Grenouilles, fifty percent of the crop was frozen and lost, so it is not going to be an easy vintage to find bottles of either of those wines! As is customary at the time of my visit in November, the wines were in varying stages of their élevage, with a few already bottled, others assembled and being prepared for bottling in the next few weeks, and others still resting comfortably without having been racked. I have noted where each wine was in its evolution in the tasting notes on the wines. Overall, this is a very successful vintage for Domaine Michel, with the wines showing lovely cut, mineral detail and really pretty fruit tones. The two grand crus of Grenouilles and les Clos will need some extended cellaring to start to stir, but most of the premier crus will drink pretty well with only a few years of bottle age, and yet age very well, based on their exemplary balances.

2017 Petit Chablis- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Petit Chablis from Domaine Michel had been bottled at the start of October and was starting to bounce back nicely by mid-November. This is a pretty and very tasty wine, offering up impressive depth of fruit for Petit Chablis, coupled to good, solid acidity and a generous personality for early drinking. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, tart orange, dried flowers and a touch of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and succulent on the attack, with a good core and quite good length and grip. A good example. 2018-2028. **87.**

2017 Chablis- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Chablis *villages* had been bottled at the same time as the Petit Chablis. This too is quite open-knit in style and will make friend early, as it delivers a fine nose of pink grapefruit, green apple, flinty minerality, white flowers and a touch of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, bouncy and nicely plump at the core, with fine focus and grip, sound framing acids and a long, juicy and quite satisfying finish. Good juice for fairly early drinking. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Chablis "Montmains"- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Montmains is a lovely bottle from Domaine Michel, and here we have some of the traditional cut and grip of top Chablis, which is not evident in the wide open Chablis AC and Petit Chablis this year. The bouquet is deep and pure, offering up a youthful mix of lime, green apple, flinty minerality, citrus peel and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and nicely structured, with a juicy core of fruit, good mineral drive and fine length and grip on the zesty finish. The next several premier crus were assembled in tank in preparation for bottling. Good juice. 2018-2040. **91.**

2017 Chablis "Forêts"- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Forêts, which is also from the Left Bank and a bit less affected by frost in this vintage, was showing very well indeed and had a nice touch of reserve to its personality. The nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of pear, lime, chalky minerality, a touch of beeswax and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and nicely racy out of the blocks, with a fine core, good transparency and a long, youthful and snappy finish. Fine wine in the making here! 2020-2045+. **92.**

2017 Chablis "Butteaux"- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Butteaux is another very good bottle in the making, but this does not have quite the same backend lift as the Forêts this year. The bouquet is pure and classy, offering up scents of sweet grapefruit, apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a topnote of lime zest. On the

palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and rock solid at the core, with good focus and balance, bright acids and lovely length on the complex finish. This too is very good, but I really like the backend energy of the Forêts this year. 2021-2045+. **91+**.

2017 Chablis “Butteaux” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The old vine bottling of Butteaux was also showing fine potential at the time of my visit, delivering a nascently complex bouquet of lemon, pear, chalky minerality, dried flowers, beeswax and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with lovely soil signature, bright acids and fine cut and grip on the long, refined and classic finish. 2022-2050. **92+**.

2017 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Vaillons from Domaine Michel is quite a fine example of the vintage, with good mineral drive and lovely cut and bounce on the backend. The bouquet is pure and very typical of this vineyard, offering up scents of pear, tart orange, chalky minerality, a touch of anise, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, crisp and full, with a lovely core, fine focus and grip, lovely backend mineral drive and a long, racy and precise finish. Good juice. 2020-2045. **92**.

2017 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Séchet is also very good, but it is a bit more forward in personality than the last couple of premier crus here and will be the one to reach for first. The nose wafts from the glass in a lovely mix of lemon, pear, wet stone minerality, white flowers and a touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely succulent on the attack, with a good core, bright acids and lovely length and grip on the complex and already quite delicious finish. This will not be the longest-lived premier cru in the Michel stables this year, but the wine is quite complete and will provide plenty of pleasure over the coming decades. 2018-2040. **92**.

2017 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

With the very low yields here in Montée de Tonnerre, I was expecting this wine to be a bit dense and further behind in its development than the other premier crus in the cellar, but this was not the case and the 2017 version here at Domaine Michel is going to be very, very good. The bouquet is pure and classic, offering up scents of apple, lime, chalky minerality, dried flowers and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, poised and racy in personality, with a fine core of fruit, excellent backend mineral drive and a long, nascently complex and zesty finish. This is very, very good this year. 2022-2050. **93**.

2017 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Vaulorent had been bottled earlier this year than customary, so this was in bottle for a week at the time of my visit. The vineyard had been badly frosted and was down by a bit more than forty percent in 2017, so there will only be one hundred cases of this wine produced in this vintage. The wine was obviously closed after its very recent *mise*, but one could still sense the complexity here in its blend of apple, lemon, a touch of grapefruit, chalky minerality, beeswax and white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine mineral drive and very good cut and grip on the still youthful finish. I am sure this will be very, very good, but have scored it in a range, due to its very recent bottling. 2020-2045. **92-93+**.

2017 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2017 Vaudésir from Louis Michel is a superb wine in the making. The bouquet is deep, pure and nicely reserved out of the blocks, delivering a fine constellation of green apple,

pear, lemon, a complex base of chalky minerality, beeswax and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with great soil signature, racy acids and excellent focus and grip on the nascently complex finish. This will need some time to blossom, but will be a superb example. 2023-2060. **94+**.

2017 Chablis “Grenouilles”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Both the Grenouilles and the les Clos are a bit denser in the mid-palate than the Vaudésir in 2017, due to the very low yields. The 2017 Grenouilles shows excellent potential on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of pink grapefruit, apple, flinty minerality, a touch of smokiness, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and again, rock solid at the core, with excellent cut and grip, a still quite primary personality and a very long, very mineral and racy finish. This will need a bit more time to unfurl, but will be excellent in due course. 2025-2060+. **94+**.

2017 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Domaine Michel’s 2017 les Clos is also a fine bottle in the making, but like the Grenouilles, it is quite concentrated and fairly monolithic today and will demand some cellaring before it starts to drink with generosity. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful mix of grapefruit, lime, a touch of pear, beeswax, wet stone minerality and smoky overtones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerful in personality, with lovely cut, grip and backend minerality to carry the rock solid fruit tones. The finish is very long, focused and snappy, with excellent potential. 2025-2065. **95**.

Domaine Patrick Piuze (Chablis)

As Patrick Piuze is dependent on purchasing grapes for his considerably deep and wide lineup of Chablis bottlings, the second short crop in a row required some concerted action on his part to source enough grapes to make enough wine to partially satisfy his customers. Consequently the number of bottles produced of each cuvée was down considerably in 2017, but the number of different bottlings was up, so that Patrick and his team could approach clients with reasonably sized allocations in this vintage. So, there are fully ten different Chablis AC bottlings in the Piuze cellars this year, as well as a new premier cru bottling of Séchets as well. Even with the expanded roster of bottlings in 2017, production is still way down at the domaine, as production figures this year were one hundred thousand bottles, where a “normal-sized” harvest will see the domaine craft one hundred and eighty thousand bottles, so production is down forty-plus percent in 2017. There is no Chablis “Decouverte” this year, nor any premier cru Vaulorent, as both were too heavily frosted in 2017 to produce a cuvée. In addition to the new Chablis AC level bottlings, Patrick has also found a parcel of old vines of Aligoté near Saint Bris that has had made a wine from this year, and which is one of the very best examples of Aligoté I have tasted from Burgundy outside of the purview of Jean-François Coche, Arnaud Ente and Domaine Ponsot. It will be a bargain and worth a search of the market to find a few bottles, as it is truly and extraordinary example of this varietal. Patrick Piuze was one of the earliest harvesters to get rolling in 2017, as he and his team were out in the vineyards collecting grapes by the 2nd of September in this year. Everything was already in bottle at the time of my visit, as Patrick and his very talented assistant, Sylvie Quittot, prefer to bottle on the earlier side and their wines are often in the market several months ahead of those from many of their neighbors. At the time of my visit, the domaine was quite busy, as Patrick’s importer from Texas was visiting with clients, so I had the pleasure to wade into the stunning lineup of 2017s with Sylvie, while Patrick entertained his visiting importer and clients with visits to the vineyards and

a “picnic” bottle of Chablis. This is a stunning range of 2017s and there is not a single bottle in this wide lineup that I would not want to have in my cellar this year. There is a bit of stylistic variation, with some of the AC level bottlings promising to drink well from the moment they hit these shores, while others have a bit more spine of acidity and could do with a year or two in the cellar to more properly blossom before drinking.



Sylvie Quittot and Patrick Piuze in their cellars in Chablis.

2017 Bourgogne Aligoté “1953”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Bourgogne Aligoté from Patrick Piuze is made from a parcel of vines planted all the way back in 1953. Patrick and Sylvie decided to barrel-ferment ninety percent of this blend, with only ten percent raised in tank to add a bit more cut to the finished wine. The wine has turned out absolutely superb on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of lemon, apple, a touch of grapefruit, chalky soil tones and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and really had an excellent core for Aligoté, with fine cut and grip on the lone and well-balanced finish. This is first class Aligoté! 2018-2035. **90.**

2017 Bourgogne “Côte d’Auxerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze’s Bourgogne “Côte d’Auxerre” is from a parcel of vines planted on Portlandian soils near Saint Bris, so this is the more fruit-driven bottling of Bourgogne in the cellars this year. The 2017 version is lovely and juicy in personality, offering up a wide open nose of apple, pear, lovely soil tones and a touch of citrus blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and bouncy, with a succulent core, sound framing acids

and good length and grip on the tasty finish. This is very easy drinking right out of the blocks and is very good for its level. 2018-2028. **88.**

2017 Bourgogne “Tonnerre” Les Boutots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Tonnerre bottling of Bourgogne hails from parcels of vines planted on Kimmeridgian limestone, so this wine is quite a bit more minerally-defined than the juicy Côte d’Auxerre version. The wine offers up quite a bit more complexity on the nose as a result of its limestone base, offering up a lovely blend of apple, pear, lemon, chalky soil tones and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and shows off excellent cut and grip, with fine focus and mineral drive on the long and impressively complex finish. To my palate, this is far more *Chablisienne* in style than the Côte d’Auxerre bottling and will appeal more to lovers of *terroir*. 2018-2032. **89+.**

2017 Petit Chablis- Domaine Patrick Piuze

If one only could drink Petit Chablis from Patrick Piuze, Vincent Dauvissat and Isabelle Raveneau, things would still not be all that bad! The 2017 Petit Chablis from Domaine Piuze was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up a precise and nicely reserved aromatic profile of grapefruit, green apple, flinty soil tones, a bout of beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows lovely purity in its fruit complexion, with a good core, bright acids and lovely length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This is very, very good Petit Chablis. 2019-2033+. **89+.**

2017 Chablis “Vallée Sébillon”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Vallée Sébillon bottling was a new Chablis AC in the Piuze lineup in 2016, with the vines located out on the western edge of Chablis in the village of Beine. The wine is one of those wide open and bouncy 2017s, offering up a vibrant bouquet and a deeply succulent and delicious palate. The nose is a lovely mix of apple, tangerine, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already quite generous on the attack, with a lovely core, fine backend, flinty minerality and very good, framing acids lifting up the long and complex finish. This is a really crowd pleaser of a Chablis AC. 2018-2035+. **90.**

2017 Chablis “Plateau de la Cornasse”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Plateau de la Cornasse bottling is new for the 2017 vintage, with these vines also located out on the western end of the Chablis AOC in the commune of Beine. The wine is fermented and raised entirely in stainless steel tanks and offers up a superb nose of pear, pink grapefruit, chalky minerality, apple blossoms and beeswax. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and beautifully mineral-driven in personality, with a fine core, excellent cut and grip and a long, zesty and well-balanced finish. This has a fine girdle of acidity to carry it a bit further in the cellar than the very good Vallée Sébillon. 2019-2040+. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de Chichée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Terroir de Chichée is a lovely example of the vintage, offering up a classic nose of apple, pear, white flowers, beeswax and a fine base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely complex right out of the blocks, with good mid-palate depth, bright, bouncy acids and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and classy finish. This has everything one could ask for in a Chablis *villages* bottling, with a lovely signature of soil, pure fruit and plenty of bounce on the backend. 2019-2040+. **90.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de la Chapelle”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Terroir de la Chapelle bottling was new in 2016 for Patrick Piuze, with this wine hailing from a parcel of vines planted in 1974. The vines are in the village of la Chapelle de Vaupelteigne (where Jean-Claude Bessin has his cellar), which lies to the northwest of the town

of Chablis, on the left bank of the Serein River and looking out at the ridge that houses the premier crus of l'Homme Mort and Fourchaume. The 2017 bottling from Domaine Piuze is another excellent *villages*, wafting from the glass in a blend of tart orange, apple, flinty soil tones, citrus peel, a bit of straw and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly primary in personality, with a good core of fruit, bright acids and fine length and grip on the still fairly youthful finish. This will want a couple of years in the cellar to blossom properly. 2020-2040+. **90.**

2017 Chablis “Coteau de Fontenay”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Coteau de Fontenay bottling was also added in 2016, in the first of the two severely short crops from frost. The parcel for this bottling lies up behind the ridge that houses the grand crus, with a southwesterly exposition and plenty of cold wine that descends in from the north. The combination of afternoon sun and cooling winds has given the wine a lovely raciness in 2017, as the wine delivers a ripe and classy nose of pear, tangerine, a touch of grapefruit, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely juicy at the core, with bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, impressively racy and precise finish. This will drink with style from the moment it is released, but has the spine of acidity to also age very well indeed. Good juice. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de Chablis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Terroir de Chablis bottling from Patrick Piuze has been a stalwart in his lineup for many years now and the 2017 version is absolutely classical in style. Readers may recall that this bottling hails from a parcel on the north-facing side of the ridge that houses the premier cru of la Forêt, and the northerly exposition must have been an advantage when the heat spike struck during the third week of August, as the wine has excellent cut and mineral drive. The bouquet delivers a superb blend of lemon, green apple, pear, chalky soil tones, beeswax and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows off outstanding backend minerality, with bright, zesty acids, excellent focus and grip and a long, precise and classy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de Courgis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Chablis “Terroir de Courgis” from Domaine Patrick Piuze is a fine bottle that will drink very nicely out of the blocks. Courgis is in the southern end of Chablis (next door to Préhy) and there is more clay here than elsewhere in the appellation, which gives the wines a slightly more fruit-driven character. The 2017 Terroir de Courgis offers up an excellent nose of apple, tangerine, a lovely base of soil tones, citrus peel, beeswax and a touch of Fourchaume-like woody elements and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and well-balanced, with fine mid-palate depth, very good cut and grip and a long finish that closes with incipient notes of paraffin. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de Fyé”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Terroir de Fyé bottling hails from a parcel of vines that lie on the lower section of the slope that houses Chapelots, looking out across the narrow valley directly at the grand cru of Blanchots. I assume this was pretty well frosted in 2017, as the wine does not have quite the same lift and cut on the backend as most of these other *villages* level bottlings. The bouquet is very pretty, offering up scents of apple, tart orange, wet stone minerality and a topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and has a very good core of fruit, with lovely transparency and sound framing acids giving the wine a nice sense of vibrancy, but there is not quite the same energy here as in the last few wines. 2018-2035+. **89+.**

2017 Chablis “Terroir de Fleys”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Terroir de Fleys, which lies near the premier cru of Mont de Milieu on the eastern side of Chablis, was completely barrel-fermented this year and raised in older casks for ten months. The wine is showing lovely aromatic complexity right out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a mix of lemon, green apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows a good strain of reserve out of the blocks, with a very good core, fine soil signature, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2018-2040+. **90+**.

2017 Chablis “La Grande Vallée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Since La Grande Vallée made its debut here in the 2014 vintage, this has consistently been my favorite in the Piuze lineup of superb *villages* level bottlings and the 2017 is no exception. The wine hails from the Left Bank *climat* of les Pargues that lies just across a small valley from Montmains and Vaillons, and was considered of premier cru level prior to the adoption of the AOC in the late 1930s. The 2017 La Grande Vallée is a lovely bottle, offering up a complex and elegant bouquet of pear, lemon, apple, chalky minerality, just a touch of Vaillons-like paraffin and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely reserved again, with an excellent core of fruit, a bright girdle of acidity, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and zesty finish. Fine, fine juice. 2019-2040+. **91+**.

2017 Chablis “Vaillons” Les Minots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 les Minots is an excellent example of Vaillons, as the vineyard escaped major frost damage in the spring and these seventy year-old vines have turned out an absolute classic as a result. The beautiful bouquet soars from the glass in a fine blend of pear, pink grapefruit, a touch of orange, pee, a complex base of chalky soil tones, white flowers and beeswax. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with outstanding mid-palate depth, bright acids and great cut and grip on the very long and energetic finish. A superb bottle. 2020-2050. **93**.

2017 Chablis “Les Roncières”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Roncières is often bottled as Vaillons, as it lies on the same slope, but the exposition here is easterly and quite different than from Patrick’s parcel of Vaillons in Les Minots, so he logically chooses to bottle this on its own. The vines are forty to fifty years of age and are planted in an unconventional east-west pattern. The 2017 Roncières delivers a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, a lovely base of soil tones, dried flowers and a topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and vibrant, with lovely focus and grip, a very good core of fruit and a long, bouncy and promising finish. This will need just a couple of years’ worth of bottle age to really start drinking with generosity. 2020-2045. **92**.

2017 Chablis “les Sèches”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

This is the new premier cru in the domaine’s lineup in 2017 and the wine is lovely. It is made from vines planted in the late 1950s or very early 1960s. The wine is excellent in its debut vintage, offering up a complex bouquet of pear, sweet grapefruit, a touch of tangerine, chalky minerality, beeswax and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and racy, with a complex core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and impressive cut and grip on the vibrant finish. A superb new addition and an absolutely classic example of Sèches. 2018-2050. **93**.



2017 Chablis “la Forêt”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 la Forêt is equally stunning. This is one of the best premier crus on the Left Bank, where serious frost damage was not an issue in April, so this wine has turned out absolutely classic in style, albeit with perhaps even a bit more mid-palate stuffing this year than in most vintages. The beautiful nose soars from the glass in a refined blend of apple, pear, chalky minerality, a touch of clementine, dried flowers, citrus peel and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and racy, with a full-bodied personality, a rock solid core, lovely backend minerality and a very long, racy and outstanding finish. Great juice. 2020-2050+. **93+**.

2017 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

It is hard not to argue that the Left Bank ridge that houses the *climats* of Butteaux, Forêt, Montmains, Séchets and Vaillons was not the most successful band of premier crus in Chablis in 2017, as these fine *terroirs* escaped most of the frost damage. Patrick Piuze’s 2017 Butteaux is outstanding, delivering a superb bouquet of pear, lemon zest, chalky minerality, tangerine, beeswax, and a floral topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and shows lovely structural reserve out of the blocks, with a lovely core, excellent soil signature, bright, zesty acids and excellent cut and grip on the very long and youthful finish. Classic Butteaux! 2022-2055. **93+**.

2017 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

I did not ask Sylvie Quittot how badly their parcel of Montée de Tonnerre was frosted in 2017, but I would guess that the crop was down here at least fifty percent. The wine shows very

good potential, but it does not have quite the lift and backend bounce of the Left Bank premier crus this year. The bouquet is gorgeous, jumping from the glass in a blend of sweet grapefruit, lemon, tangerine, a lovely base of limestone, beeswax and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with plenty of acidity, excellent cut and grip and a long, focused and very well-balanced finish. This is deep and concentrated, but it is still quite adolescent and will need some time in the cellar to blossom. It may well prove that the wine is just going through an extended period of grumpiness after its summer bottling and my score will seem conservative down the road, as there is certainly plenty of minerality and mid-palate stuffing here. But, today, there are other premier crus in the cellar whose personalities I find a tad more attractive this year. 2022-2055. **92+**.

2017 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The vineyard of Bougros can often be the most sumptuous and fruit forward Chablis grand cru in its youth, but often without quite the spine of minerality that defines the other grand crus. However, this is not the case with the 2017 from Patrick Piuze, which is racy, precise and very, very transparent this year and one of the best young examples of this vineyard that I have had the pleasure to taste. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a refined blend of pear, lemon, grapefruit, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a youthful topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive this year, bright, snappy acids and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex finish. Outstanding Bougros! 2022-2060+. **94**.

2017 Chablis “Côte de Bouqueyreaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick’s 2017 Côte de Bouqueyreaux was one of the best examples of Chablis I tasted during my trip. The stunning nose delivers an aromatic constellation of pear, lemon, very complex, chalky minerality, beeswax, dried flowers and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a rock solid core, stunning mineral drive, racy acids and great complexity and grip on the very, very long, refined and utterly seamless finish. Brilliant juice. 2022-2065. **96**.

2017 Chablis “Blanchots”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Blanchots from Patrick Piuze is far more closed down on the palate than any of the grand crus to precede it in this lineup, but it does offer a quite expressive nose out of the blocks of tangerine, apple, chalky soil tones, a touch of grapefruit and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a reserved personality, fine cut and grip and a long, primary and perhaps very, very promising finish. This is going to certainly be very good when it blossoms, but I do not get the sense that it will be able to quite catch the excellent quality of the Côte de Bouqueyreaux this year. 2025-2065. **94**.

2017 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 les Clos from Monsieur Piuze is also quite a young wine, but in contrast to the rather shut down Blanchots, all of the constituent components here are precisely set down and its future shape is already very facile to read. The bouquet shows lovely ripe fruit, coupled to striking minerality, as it delivers cents of pear, grapefruit, lemon oil, a gorgeous base of flinty minerality, spring flowers and a vibrant topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure, with a beautiful core of fruit, great soil inflection, bright acids and stunning length and grip on the youthful, but now perfectly delineated and very, very promising finish. A great bottle of les Clos in the making. 2023-2065. **96+**.

2017 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 Valmur *chez* Piuze was more hunkered down (in the style of the Blanchots) at the time of my visit in November, but this may be a reflection of the heavier frost damage in this vineyard than in certain other grand crus. The wine is deep, powerful and reserved on the palate, with good acids, fine focus and great backend energy and grip for down the road. The bouquet reluctantly offers up scents of pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones, beeswax, white flowers and orange peel. There is plenty of structure here for the long haul and the wine has very good acidity and lift, but it will need some time in the cellar to start to blossom. 2026-2065. **95.**

2017 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2017 les Preuses from Patrick and Sylvie is utterly classical in profile and a brilliant wine in the making. The celestial bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex mix of lemon, apple, pink grapefruit, a very complex base of limestone minerality, a touch of oyster shell, beeswax, citrus zest and white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with great backend mineral drive, racy acids, laser-like focus and exceptional purity and lift on the very, very long finish. Gorgeous Preuses! 2025-2065+. **97.**

Domaine Raveneau (Chablis)

Isabelle Raveneau is very happy with how the family’s 2017s are turning out, as the wines are developing beautifully in cask and were showing great potential at the time of my visit. The frost damage varied quite a bit from vineyard to vineyard in 2017, so for example, the Raveneau family’s parcels in Valmur and Montée de Tonnerre were the most severely-frosted, while others were more gently touched by the freeze and the style of the wines is far more classical as a result. The domaine began harvesting on September 5th in 2017 and had brought in everything by the 10th or 11th of the month, with no signs in any of the bottlings that the bit of rain on the 9th and 10th had affected the style or quality of the wines made from the last picked bunches. Isabelle noted that the timing of the malolactic fermentations for the 2017s were “quite normal” for the domaine, whereas the 2018s were very rapid and most were already completed at the time of my visit to the estate in mid-November. This is one of those cellars in Chablis where the wines with the most severe frost damage of 2017 have produced very concentrated wines that are lagging behind the others in the cellars in terms of aromatic and flavor complexity development, and seemed likely to need some extended bottle aging to blossom. I had a preference stylistically for the wines made from the more “correct” yields over those which were very concentrated from the frost damage, but this is still very early days for the entire range and one can easily imagine that the more concentrated wines will turn out beautifully with cellaring. As Isabelle Raveneau mentioned when discussing the grand crus, “we had more normal yields in Blanchots and Clos than we did in Valmur, so we have more classic wines from those two vineyards in 2017.”

2017 Petit Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

I have loved the Petit Chablis *chez* Raveneau since its introduction to the lineup a handful of vintages ago and the 2017 version is going to be very lovely. The bouquet is bright and very precise, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of apple, lemon, beeswax, limestone soil tones and a touch of orange peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows off an excellent core for Petit Chablis, with bright acids, fine focus and a long, zesty and perfectly balanced finish. Lovely juice. 2018-2030. **88+.**

2017 Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

The 2017 Chablis *villages* from Domaine Raveneau is a bit fuller than the Petit Chablis, but also a bit more wide open and generous out of the blocks. The succulent nose offers up scents of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote redolent of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely plump at the core, with sound framing acids, very good focus and balance and a long, joyful and ready to go finish. There is plenty of early generosity here that is going to make this a crowd favorite, but the slightly racier Petit Chablis is very close in quality this year. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2017 Montmains from Domaine Raveneau is a superb wine in the making, beautifully dovetailing the succulent and pure fruit of the vintage with excellent mineral drive and signature. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a complex blend of apple, pear, lemon, complex, wet stone minerality, citrus zest and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and racy in personality, with a fine core, lovely transparency, ripe, snappy acids and beautiful balance and grip on the very long and classy finish. This is delightful juice. 2019-245+. **92.**

2017 Chablis “Forêt”- Domaine Raveneau

The Forêt parcel of the Raveneaus was just a touch less frosted than the Montmains in 2017, and this seems to have been translated into a touch more reserve out of the blocks in the finished wine. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up a mix of tart orange, apple, lemon, beeswax, spring flowers, a touch of beeswax, flinty soil tones and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely structured, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and a long, vibrant and energetic finish. This is lovely, lovely wine in the making. 2021-2050. **92+.**

2017 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Raveneau

I love the precision and classical profile of the 2017 Vaillons *chez* Raveneau. The nose is youthfully complex and beautifully focused, offering up a constellation of apple, pear, white flowers, a nice touch of oyster shell, orange zest, chalky minerality and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely layers, with a great interplay of minerality and ripe fruit, bright, zesty acids and a long, focused and utterly refined finish. This is another really lovely premier cru in the making. 2021-2050. **92+.**

2017 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2017 Butteaux from the domaine is absolutely classical in style and personality, despite being one of the more frosted premier crus in the Raveneau lineup. The bouquet is pure and beautifully expressive, delivering scents of pear, lemon zest, a touch of tart orange, chalky soil tones, incipient notes of paraffin and a lovely floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with precise and complex minerality, bright, snappy acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long finish. There is a nice sense of reserve to this wine on the palate that augurs very well for its long-term development. 2023-2060. **93+.**

2017 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Raveneau

With the Montée de Tonnerre being the most heavily-frosted of the Domaine Raveneau premier cru parcels, it is not surprising that this wine was lagging a bit behind the other premier crus in the cellar in mid-November. The nose is quite reticent, but eventually offers up scents of apple, pear, complex, chalky minerality, dried flowers, beeswax and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a bit more

concentration than usual from the low yields. The finish is long, poised and displays an excellent structural chassis for long-term development, with racy acids, impeccable mineral drive and excellent grip, and despite this wine lagging a bit in development at the present time, it seems very likely to be flat out brilliant once it blossoms. 2024-2060. **94.**

2017 Chablis “Blanchot”- Domaine Raveneau

As I mentioned in the introduction, the Blanchots was not particularly hard hit by frost in 2017 and the wine has turned out to be an absolute classical interpretation of this beautiful *terroir* in this vintage. The pure, refined and nascently complex nose jumps from the glass in a blend of apple, lemon, tangerine, chalky minerality, beeswax, dried flowers and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nicely solid at the core, with beautiful transparency and grip, bright, zesty acids, great focus and bounce and impressive mineral drive on the very long and intensely flavored finish. Great juice. 2024-2065+. **95+.**



Isabelle Raveneau in the family domaine's offices in the heart of Chablis.

2017 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2017 Valmur from the Raveneau family shows the concentration from the very low yields in this frost-damaged parcel, and consequently, was quite a bit more reserved in personality at the time of my visit. The bouquet is youthful and very deep, offering up scents of apple, pear, orange zest, limestone minerality and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent cut and grip and a very long,

powerful and nascently complex finish. This is still very, very primary in personality and will need extended aging to start to stir. I like it very much, but stylistically, the utterly classical Blanchots steals my heart this year over the more powerful Valmur. 2025-2065+. **94.**

2017 Chablis “Clos”- Domaine Raveneau

Domaine Raveneau’s 2017 Clos is one of the finest Chablis bottlings made this year and, like the Blanchots, it is completely classic in shape and style. The brilliant bouquet delivers a refined aromatic constellation of lemon, apple, pear, limestone minerality, beeswax, just a whisper of vanillin oak and a beautiful floral topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with a racy girdle of acidity, great focus and cut and a very, very long, vibrant and utterly seamless finish. This is a brilliant young example of Clos. 2027-2075. **98.**

Gevrey-Chambertin:

Domaine Denis Bachelet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Not surprisingly, Denis Bachelet has once again made some of the finest wines of the vintage in 2017, but this seems to be the case in almost every recent vintage. He began picking on September 9th in this year (I did not ask if the rain affected his decision of when to start), but the wines show absolutely no effects from this and are deep, pure, sappy and terroir-driven wines of enormous potential. The malolactics here were quite normal in their completion, finishing up by April and Denis racked the entire cellar in May of 2018, so the wines were absolutely singing at the time of my November visit. Monsieur Bachelet noted that he has altered things just a bit with his Corbeaux bottling in the last few years, reducing the number of punch-downs of the cap during fermentation for this wine from his customary three to two per day, as he is looking to find just a bit more of the elegant side of Corbeaux in this bottling. Denis began this practice with his 2014 vintage of Corbeaux, but it was only with the 2017 that I noticed the change and asked if anything was different, as the wine is truly refined in personality this year, without losing any of the customary depth and structural chassis that makes this bottling such a great candidate for long-term cellaring. As he noted, “I just wanted to make a bit more gentle extraction for this wine and I think this approach is working well.” I’ll say! Denis Bachelet thinks that the 2017 vintage is very, very good for his wines, but that they will come forward a bit sooner than some other recent vintages such as 2015 and 2016, so they should not demand the same extended aging as several recent top vintages here. To my palate, though the tannins are extremely refined this year, there is also across the board the depth of fruit and structural chassis in the 2017s chez Bachelet that only the most successful wines of the vintage have realized, and with their absolutely impeccable balances, these are going to be wines that age very long and gracefully. They may be accessible a year or two earlier than more obviously tannic vintages of recent years, but I can see no logical reason to rush to drink them (other than how delicious they are likely to be in their relative youth) and I fully expect that these wines will be ranked up at the very pinnacle of the 2017 vintage as time marches on and we get a chance to really gain an appreciation for just how stunning the very best wines are in this vintage.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2017 Bourgogne rouge from Monsieur Bachelet is an excellent example in the making. The deep and sappy nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of black cherries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a touch of meatiness and a lovely base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely plush on the attack, with a good core, a bit of backend

tannin and a long, balanced and very satisfying finish. A very, very good Bourgogne. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2017 Côte de Nuits Villages from Domaine Bachelet is also outstanding. The bouquet offers up a sweet and sappy constellation of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, grilled meats, dark soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very precise out of the blocks, with a sappy core, lovely focus and grip, fine soil signature and a long, modestly tannic and impressively complex finish. If the village of Brochon had premier crus, this would be one! 2018-2040+. **90.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

Monsieur Bachelet’s 2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes” is absolutely superb this year, with a beautiful synthesis of deep and sappy fruit coupled to striking minerality. The nose jumps from the glass in an evocative blend of black raspberries, grilled meats, black cherries, toasty oak, a beautiful base of black minerality and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and almost sumptuous on the attack, with great depth in the mid-palate, fine-grained tannins and impeccable focus and grip on the long, complex and sappy finish. I love the backend energy and lift here! 2023-2060. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2017 les Evocelles is utterly refined and sappy *chez* Bachelet. The nose is a seductive blend of black cherries, black plums, raw cocoa, violets, a gorgeous base of soil tones, woodsmoke, meaty overtones and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and supremely elegant in profile, with a very sappy core, great transparency, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2023-2060. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Corbeaux” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2017 les Corbeaux from Denis Bachelet is another stellar wine in the making. In this vintage the wine was raised in fifty percent new oak. The truly beautiful bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, black plums, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, incipient notes of cola, grilled meats, smoky oak and an exotic topnote of licorice. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very mineral in profile, with a sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and lovely *nervosité* and lift on the very long, very refined and complex finish. This is a stunning bottle of premier cru in the making! 2027-2075. **94.**

2017 Charmes-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

And the 2017 Charmes-Chambertin *chez* Bachelet? Utterly profound and one of the finest red wines I tasted during my entire trip! The magnificent bouquet offers up scents of sappy black cherries, black raspberries, grilled meats, a very complex base of soil, raw cocoa, again a touch of licorice and a fine foundation of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nascently complex and very sappy at the core, with stellar transparency, great focus and grip, ripe tannins and a very, very long, tangy and seamlessly balanced finish. This is still a very primary wine, but its inherent complexity is already self-evident and this will be ultimately ranked as one of the truly legendary vintages of Denis’ magical, very old vine Charmes-Chambertin. 2030-2100. **98.**

Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Éric Burguet was in a good mood at the time of my visit in early November, at least about the 2017 vintage, which he noted “has turned out very well and will offer pleasure to drink early, but should also age quite nicely with their good, supple structures.” He noted that the 2018

fermentations were more of a concern for he and his brother Jean-Luc at the present time, as there are very high sugar levels from the torrid summer of 2018 and fermentations are not going as easily as had been the case the year before. As Gevrey was one of the villages where the frost damage had been quite extensive in 2016, the yields in 2017 were quite generous and Éric noted that they had to go out and buy a few more new casks for this vintage than is customary, as they simply did not have enough barrels in the cellar to handle the quantity of wine. He noted that most of the additional new oak casks were delegated to the old vine bottling of Gevrey “Mes Favorites”, which will be raised in about fifty-five percent new oak in 2017, which is about five percent higher than has been customary here for many years. The 2017 Bourgogne rouge here had just been bottled a few days before my visit and we did not taste that wine, but everything else was still in cask and showing very well indeed. Picking in 2017 started chez Burguet on September 11th of this year. The cellar had not yet been racked, but as the malos had generally been on the early side and finishing up in the early spring, most of the wines were really showing beautifully. The only two wines in the cellar that had been a bit slow with their malos in 2017 were the two bottlings of Vosne-Romanée- the AC and the premier cru Rouge Dessus. These had completed their malolactic fermentations at the end of August and were obviously a bit behind in their evolutions as a result, in comparison to the other wines in the cellar, but shared the same fine potential of the other Burguet wines in 2017. The lovely Chambolle AC bottling that the Burguet brothers have been making here now for several years will have its final vintage in 2018, as the sharecropping agreement has ended and the owners of the parcel of vines wish to go in another direction. It is too bad, as the 2017 was really singing at the time of my visit and I will be sorry to see this wine disappear from the lineup after the 2018.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée Symphonie”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2017 Cuvée Symphonie was raised in thirty percent new wood this year. It was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up a pure and beautifully red fruity bouquet of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, forward in personality and nicely sappy at the core, with good soil signature, modest tannins and a long, complex and vibrant finish. This will be ready to drink early on in its evolution, but also is so well balanced that it will age quite nicely, despite not a whole lot of tannin. 2018-2045. **90.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Mes Favorites”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2017 Mes Favorites old vine bottling was also showing quite nicely in early November. This is more black fruity in personality than the Cuvée Symphonie, but is a nice mix of both colors, as it offers up red and black cherries, a bit of sweet dark berry, woodsmoke, grilled meats, a fine base of dark soil tones, spicy oak and a lovely topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with a fine synthesis of sappy fruit and fine minerality. The finish is long, focused and moderately tannic, with excellent balance and a long, promising finish. This will want at least a few years in the cellar to blossom properly and should also age very nicely. 2022-2055. **91+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

Happily, there are three *pièces* of Champeaux in the Burguet cellars in 2017, with one of the barrels this year being new. These vines were planted in 1987, so Éric Burguet notes “that they are just starting to reach a good age.” The wine offers up lovely refinement on the nose, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, *fraises du bois*, a hint of beetroot, grilled meats, roses, a very complex base of soil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and

nicely soil-driven in personality, with plenty of sappiness at the core, superb balance and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and utterly classical finish. I love the *terroir* of Champeaux and the Burguet brothers have made a beautiful example of this vineyard in 2017. 2024-2060. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The Lavaux St. Jacques from the Burguets is much older vines than the Champeaux, as these vines are sixty years of age. There are only two barrels of this wine in the cellars this year, so one of these was new and the wine saw a slightly higher percentage of new oak. The wine is more black fruity than the Champeaux, but equally deep, polished and soil-driven, as it offers up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, black minerality, grilled meats. Woodsmoke and a stylish base of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent, with a sappy core of black fruit, fine mineral drive and a very long, ripely tannic and vibrant finish. This is first class Lavaux. 2025-2065. **93+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Echézeaux”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The penultimate vintage of the Burguet brothers’ Chambolle AC is very pretty and a beautiful expression of the village’s *terroir*, delivering a fine bouquet of cherries, raspberries, raw cocoa, rose petals, chalky soil tones and just a whiff of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and utterly charming in personality, with a good core of red fruit, just a bit of backend tannin and very good length and grip on the transparent and sappy finish. Just a lovely bottle of Chambolle that will drink well right from the outset. 2018-2045. **91.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

As I mentioned in the introduction, the two Vosne bottlings *chez* Burguet were the only ones with late malos, so the wines were lagging a bit in terms of their evolution in barrel. The *villages* finished up its malo at the end of July of 2018, but was starting to blossom nicely on the nose, offering up a mix of red and black raspberries, Vosne spices, duck, a lovely base of minerality, cocoa powder and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and tangy, with fine nascent complexity, a sappy core of fruit, just a bit of backend tannin perking up the long and vibrant finish. This too is a terrific village wine in the making. These vines are located in the lower section of Rouge Dessus and are not entitled to premier cru status, but are nicely situated. 2020-2045. **91+.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Rouge Dessus”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The Burguets’ premier cur Rouge Dessus was also starting to blossom nicely at the time of my visit. The excellent bouquet delivers a fine constellation of black cherries, black raspberries, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with ripe tannins, a fine core of fruit, lovely soil signature and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This will need some time in the cellar to blossom, but will be excellent. 2024-2065. **93.**

2017 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

There are three barrels of Clos de Bèze this year in the Burguet cellars, with two of them new oak. The wine is already showing stellar complexity on the nose, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, raspberries, a beautiful array of spice tones, a complex base of minerality, gentle meatiness, a bit of mustard seed and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with fine focus and detail, fine-grained tannins and excellent backend mineral drive on the long, complex and utterly refined finish. High class juice. 2027-2075+. **95.**



The quiet of winter in a parcel of vines in Gevrey-Chambertin.

Domaine Fourrier (Gevrey-Chambertin)

We did not taste with Jean-Marie Fourrier this year, so I do not have quite as much background information for the domaine's 2017s as I would normally have. The harvest here started on September 7th with the domaine's Bourgogne Blanc and the entire range of 2017s had been racked two weeks prior to my visit on the 16th of November into stainless steel tanks for the winter, prior to their spring bottling. As we were not tasting with Jean-Marie, I did not have a chance to taste through the fine range of négociant bottlings that Monsieur Fourrier has now been producing for several vintages, and had to content myself with the range of domaine bottlings. The Fourrier family practiced a green harvest in certain vineyards in 2017 (presumably those that were most heavily frost-damaged the year before and had plenty of pent up energy in the vines, such as in their Chambolle parcels), but not in others. A couple of the wines were still a bit out of sorts from their racking a couple of weeks previous, and for those wines, I have scored them within a range to be fair, but would expect them to eventually merit a score at the top of the range.

Domaine Wines

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Fourrier

This wine has turned out nicely ripe and quite pretty in personality. The bouquet offers up scents of peach, apple, orange zest, a lovely base of soil tones and a nice touch of upper register

salinity. On the palate the wine is bright, full, ripe and succulent, with sound acids and good length and grip. A crowd pleaser. 2018-2025+. **88.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Clos Solon”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Clos Solon from Jean-Marie Fourrier is a very good village wine, offering up a bright and sappy nose of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, venison, a good base of soil and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, sappy and shows a good base of soil tones, with a generous core of fruit, a touch of backend tannin and good length and grip on the bouncy and fairly open finish. Good juice. 2023-2055. **89.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Chambolle V.V. is a very pretty and red fruity wine, offering up a brambly nose of strawberries, cherries, beetroot, cocoa powder, a nice base of soil tones and a topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and nicely soil-driven, with fine shape and bounce on the backend, a discreet base of ripe tannin and good grip on the long and tasty finish. This has just a touch more inherent complexity than the Clos Solon, but both share a lovely, forward personality and should drink really well with five years’ worth of bottle age. 2023-2055. **89+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Aux Echézeaux”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 aux Echézeaux bottling of Gevrey AC from Jean-Marie Fourrier is a very nice bottle as well, with a bit more of a reserved profile than the first two *villages* bottlings, but not quite the same mid-palate depth as the Chambolle old vine. The nose is very pretty, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, venison, dark soil tones, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a nice touch of sap at the core, with fine transparency, moderate tannins and good length and grip on the youthful finish. Good juice, but I have to give a slight nod to the above wine. 2024-2055. **89.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Gevrey V.V. bottling was showing a bit of reduction at the time of my visit, but with some coaxing eventually delivers a nose of red and black cherries, black minerality, gamebird, raw cocoa and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep and full, but still a bit unsettled from its recent racking, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long finish. I am sure this is going to be quite good, but in this stage, I have scored it within a range. 2024-2055. **89-90+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Gruenchers”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Gruenchers was showing very nicely, but the extreme frost damage of 2016 seems to have left its mark a touch on the 2017 version, as the Gruenchers was just a touch *fluide* at the time of my visit. The bouquet is very, very pretty, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, red berries, mustard seed, a touch of cocoa powder, chalky soil tones, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and elegant, with fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and good, but not great depth at the core. This is very stylish and it may yet put on a bit of mid-palate weight, in which my score will seem a tad conservative. 2026-2065. **91.**

2017 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Domaine Fourrier Petits Vougeots was showing very well at the time of my visit, with that extra bit of stuffing at the core to really make it an exciting wine. The bouquet is a lovely constellation of cherries, strawberries, chalky minerality, *pigeon*, roses and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, but with a lovely sense of reserve to its personality that augurs very well for its future development. The finish is long, focused and moderately tannic, with impeccable balance and impressive incipient complexity.

As I have written in the past, the *terroir* of Petits Vougeots is essentially an extension of Chambolle across the communal border, and this is the slightly superior Chambolle premier cru in the Fourrier cellars this year! 2025-2065. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cherbaudes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Fourrier Cherbaudes has very good constituent components, but it was still a bit agitated from its recent *assemblage* and not entirely happy about being tasted. The bouquet offers up scents of plums, red and black cherries, gamebird, raw cocoa, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite promising, with good sappiness at the core and good transparency, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the classy and quite elegant finish. This was not showing great focus on the day of my visit, but I am certain that this was just a reflection of its recent racking and the wine is going to be very, very good. 2027-2065. **91-92+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Fourrier

In contrast to the still slightly grumpy Cherbaudes, the 2017 Champeaux was in fine form and absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet is very precise and absolutely classic in profile, offering up a vibrant blend of red and black cherries, grilled meats, mustard seed, a superb base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and energetic, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex and promising finish. An excellent wine. 2027-2065. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Goulots”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Domaine Fourrier Goulots was showing beautifully on the nose, but was still a bit out of sorts on the palate. The bouquet is pure, complex and very elegant in profile, delivering scents of cherries, strawberries, mustard seed, chalky minerality, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, and complex, with good sappiness at the core, suave tannins, lovely balance and a long, refined and vibrant finish. The focus here is a bit agitated post-racking, but it should be outstanding in due course. 2025-2065. **92-93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combes aux Moines”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Combes aux Moines had not yet been assembled in tank, as the malo was later here for this wine. The wine was showing very well on the nose, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and promising, but still a bit grumpy and not yet precise, with fine-grained tannins and very good backend energy. This still needs some *elevage* to snap into place, but will do so with a bit more time and should prove to be excellent. 2027-2065. **92-93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Clos St. Jacques was also still a bit grumpy about being tasted, but all of the pieces are in place here for a great wine down the road. The bouquet was spot on at the time of my visit and truly beautiful, offering up scents of sappy red and black cherries, a brambly touch of black raspberry, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a lovely spice element and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is more closed than any of the other premier crus in the cellar today, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe, well-integrated tannins and impressive length and grip on the still very primary finish. I am sure this will be a great wine. 2028-2065+. **93-94+.**

2017 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Fourrier

The 2017 Domaine Fourrier Griotte was also not entirely happy to be tasted at the time of my visit, but was eventually coaxed to show a very sappy nose of plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, gamebird, lovely soil tones, chalky minerality and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, lovely length and grip, fine-grained

tannins and outstanding length on the backend. As was the case with the Clos St. Jacques, this wine had not yet snapped fully back into focus, but will certainly do so over the remainder of its *elevage* and will be a beautiful wine. 2030-2085+. **94-95.**

Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Philippe Harmand has made excellent wines in 2017. He began picking on the 9th of September in this vintage and reported that malos were generally completed in a timely manner in 2017, with most of the wines finishing up their secondary fermentations between January and February of 2018. He had racked most of the cellar two weeks prior to my early November visit this year, so all the wines were in tank for preparation early in the new year, with the exception of the Lavaux St. Jacques and Mazis-Chambertin, which were still happily resting comfortably in barrel and were due for a racking in the coming days after I stopped by the domaine. As the Mazis was still in cask and not yet racked, Philippe and I had a chance to make comparisons between different approximations of varying percentages of new oak, as there was one older cask to go along with the new barrels. The 2017 Mazis will ultimately be finished with ninety percent new oak, but we tried varying percentages to see which we liked better, and much to my surprise, I preferred the ninety percent that Philippe had settled on for the vintage, better than three-quarters, half or one-quarter new oak. The terroir of Mazis really seemed to take well to the higher percentage of new oak and the ninety percent blend was the brightest and best balanced of all the variations we tried. Not what I was expecting! The 2017s from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy are really good this year, with plenty of sappy black fruit coupled to exemplary expressions of underlying terroir and just beautiful balances up and down the hierarchy of appellation.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Harmand-Geoffroy is a very good example in the making. The quite complex nose delivers scents of black cherries, cassis, dark soil tones, a nice touch of grilled meats and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, round and already nicely generous on the attack, with a good core for its level and a bit of backend tannin perking up the long finish. 2018-2030+. **88.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Philippe Harmand's 2017 Gevrey *villages* bottling is also a lovely example of its level and *terroir*. The bouquet offers up a good, black fruity mix of cassis, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, a bit of black minerality, meaty tones and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and potentially quite suave on the attack, with a plump middle, good focus and grip, moderate tannins and a long, complex and nicely soil-driven finish. Good juice that will drink well from release. 2018-2040. **89+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin "en Jousse"- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The Harmand family's 2017 en Jousse *monopole* is another fine AC in the making. The nose is a tad deeper and a bit more precise than the straight *villages*, offering up a fine aromatic blend of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, game, charred wood, a good base of soil, cedar and a nice touch of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, round and nicely generous already, with a good core, fine soil tones, moderate tannins and a nice tangy backend that provides life and focus on the long finish. This is very tasty. 2020-2045. **90.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

To my palate, this is one of the best values to be found in the village of Gevrey-Chambertin year in and year out and the 2017 version will be no exception. As readers may recall, this bottling is made up of a combination of very old vines in the *villages* level section of Clos Prieur, coupled with some premier cru fruit from the same vineyard, whose vines are not quite as venerable. The results are most often premier cru quality at village level pricing. The 2017 Clos Prieur *chez* Harmand is excellent, delivering a fine bouquet of black cherries, cassis, a touch of licorice, grilled meats, black minerality, cedar and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine mineral drive, impressive nascent complexity, fine-grained tannins and a long, bright and very well-balanced finish. This will be a very, very good value in the context of Burgundy pricing today. 2022-2055+. **91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Phillip Harmand’s 2017 Vieilles Vignes bottling is also excellent this year. The wine delivers a classic nose of black cherries, dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, black minerality, woodsmoke and a touch of chicory in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite focused, with a good core, fine soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, poised and very nicely balanced finish. 2021-2050+. **91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bossière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The Harmand family’s la Bossière is also very good in 2017. The wine delivers a promising nose of dark berries, cassis, roasted meats, bitter chocolate, a lovely topnote of spice, dark soil tones, cedary oak and incipient notes of cola in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows lovely mid-palate sappiness, with fine structure and soil signature, fine-grained tannins and excellent bounce and grip on the long and focused finish. This is very good juice in the making. 2023-2065. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Perrière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

I have been late coming to the table of realizing just how fine this premier cru *terroir* is in the hands of a top estate, but I am becoming a bigger and bigger fan of la Perrière with each passing vintage. The 2017 version from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is excellent, wafting from the glass in a classy blend of cassis, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, black minerality, a touch of licorice, mustard seed and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a sappy core of black fruit, lovely mineral drive, , suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the supremely elegant finish. I love the combination here of sappy fruit, transparency and elegance! First class premier cru. 2025-2065+. **92+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The Harmand family’s example of Champeaux is always one of the top premier crus in the village and the 2017 is again an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet delivers a fine combination of black cherries, cassis, dark chocolate, grilled meats, a very complex base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit more powerfully built than the lovely Perrière, with a rock solid core, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a nice sense of reserve on the very long, nascently complex and well-balanced finish. This too will be outstanding, but will need some bottle age to blossom properly. 2025-2065. **92+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

As I mentioned in the introductory section, the Lavaux St. Jacques was still in cask at the time of my visit. The 2017 version *chez* Harmand will be raised in forty percent new oak this year and the wine was singing in early November, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of sweet dark berries, black cherries, espresso, complex, black minerality, roasted meats and a nice

touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core of black fruit, outstanding mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, poised and classy finish. This is excellent. 2025-2065+. **93.**

2017 Mazis-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

As I mentioned above, Philippe and I sampled the Mazis in several different new oak percentages, making approximations of the blends with different casks, but the ninety percent version that will be bottled was by far the best (and a complete surprise to me!). The wine is going to be superb, as it delivers a youthfully complex and very pure bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, a very complex base of black minerality, a touch of Mazis' vegetal signature aromatics and a good base of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with superb transparency, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This wine carries its new wood seamlessly and the higher percentage of oak gives the wine more vibrancy and precision- much to my surprise! Great juice. 2028-2080. **95.**



Two generations of the Harmand family outside their offices: Gérard and Philippe Harmand.

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

I was very fortunate to be able to taste through the superb 2017s at Domaine Rossignol-Trapet during my November visit, as I had gone back and forth with Madame Rossignol in the office about possibilities available for both of our schedules during the busy tasting month of November, but my last email had gotten lost in their spam folder and so they were expecting me on a Tuesday morning, when I was already booked to spend that day in Chablis. However, as my

email was detained in spam, I had not heard back from them and when I finished up my tasting with Denis Bachelet across the street, I took a look over at the Rossignol-Trapet parking lot and did not see any visitors' cars parked there. Surmising that the Rossignol brothers were not hosting a tasting at that moment, I wandered across the street to ask about possibilities for an appointment later in my trip, once I had returned from Chablis. As Nicolas Rossignol was free and it was only 4:00 PM, he said "how about right now?" and things were simplified immensely for my schedule the following week! The Rossignol brothers and their team began harvesting on September 7th in 2017 and were very happy with the ripeness of their stems this year, so that on average, they were able to use about sixty percent whole clusters in this vintage. As is typical during a November visit to the domaine, the wines were in varying stages of their élevage, with the Bourgogne having been racked four weeks prior, the Beaune "Theurons" only a week before, but with the other wines still in cask and not yet racked or moved in preparation for bottling early in the new year. The lineup of all five Gevrey premier crus this year is truly exceptional, with the wines so beautifully emblematic of their respective terroirs. The Cherbaudes and Combottes are very elegant, perfumed middleweights in the making, with the Corbeaux, Clos Prieur and Petite Chapelle a bit more overtly structured and deeper in their respective cores. All are perfect examples of their respective vineyards and stellar wines in the making. The three grand crus in the cellar are simply brilliant in 2017. David and Nicolas Rossignol have made a stellar lineup of 2017s and have not missed any of the potential inherent in this fine vintage.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet was showing quite nicely for having been racked a month ago and offers up a bright and stylish nose of red and black cherries, grilled meats, a nice touch of chocolate, good soil tones and a whisper of cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and nicely succulent on the attack, with a good core, just a bit of backend tannin and fine length on the well balanced finish. Good juice. 2018-2035. **88.**

2017 Beaune "Theurons"- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Beaune "Theurons" was a bit more unsettled from its more recent racking, so the wine had not yet snapped back into precise focus on either the nose or palate, but it was still easy to appreciate that this is going to be a very good wine this year. The nose offers up scents of black cherries, chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a nice touch of soil and a gentle framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, plush and nascently complex, with a nice touch of sappiness at the core, round tannins and fine length and grip on the classy finish. I am sure this is going to be very good Beaune once it settles back in after its racking. 2021-2050+. **90-91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin "Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The Rossignol brothers' 2017 Gevrey-Chambertin "Vieilles Vignes" is an excellent wine in the making. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, a complex base of soil, a touch of mustard seed, cocoa powder and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and elegant in profile, with a lovely attack, a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, complex and already very suave finish. *Tout en finesse!* 2022-2055+. **90+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin "Cherbaudes"- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Cherbaudes *chez* Rossignol shows off all of the inherent elegance of the vintage. The bouquet is pure and already beautifully expressive, offering up scents of red plums, black cherries, cocoa powder, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones, a touch of cinnamon, vanillin oak and an exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied,

focused and very refined, with a good core of fruit, fine transparency, moderate, suave tannins and a very long, intensely flavored and complex finish. This is not a blockbuster by any stretch of the imagination this year, but will prove to be an utterly complete and compelling middleweight when it is ready to drink. 2025-2060. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combottes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Combottes from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is another very refined premier cru this year. The aromatic constellation offers up a superb mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, mustard seed, a hint of cinnamon, a very complex base of soil, *pigeon* and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and impressively light on its feet, with a sappy core of fruit, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very long, tangy and complex finish. This is just beautiful wine in the making. 2024-2060. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Corbeaux”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The Rossignol brothers have crafted an absolutely classic example of Corbeaux in the 2017 vintage. The nose soars from the glass in a black fruity blend of black cherries, black plums, dark soil tones, a touch of licorice, grilled meats, raw cocoa and a discreet foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and quite sappy at the core, with excellent mineral drive, ripe, suave tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully balanced finish. This has a touch more mid-palate amplitude than either the Cherbaudes or Combottes, but is every bit as elegant. Fine, fine juice. 2025-2060+. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Clos Prieur *chez* Rossignol is absolutely superb on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a fine constellation of sweet dark berries, cassis, espresso, bonfire, grilled meats, black minerality, raw cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and nicely plump at the core, with excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very complex and utterly precise finish. Just superb wine. 2023-2060. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Petite Chapelle is the Rossignols’ most concentrated premier cru this year, but it gives up nothing in terms of elegance in perfume for its bit of extra depth at the core. The bouquet is pure and absolutely beautiful, offering up scents of plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke, a touch of nutskin, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core, great undertow of soil elements, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, refined and complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2065. **93+.**

2017 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is a stunning wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and already very complex, soaring from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, a hint of cinnamon, gentle meaty tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full and rock solid at the core, with superb soil signature, great focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a very long, nascently complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is a great, great wine in the making. 2027-2080+. **95+.**

2017 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The domaine’s 2017 Chapelle-Chambertin is every bit as beautiful as the Latricières this year. The wine delivers an aromatic constellation of sophistication and immense promise, offering up scents of plums, red and black cherries, gamebird, raw cocoa, a touch of mustard seed, complex soil tones, a hint of spice and a judicious framing of new oak. On the palate the

wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with lovely mineral drive, great focus and grip, tangy acids and a very long, suavely-tannic and vibrant finish. Stellar Chapelle. 2027-2080+. **95+**.

2017 Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2017 Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is utterly complete wine. The refined and perfumed nose offers up a youthful mix of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa powder, grilled meats, a very complex base of soil, woodsmoke, cinnamon and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with a beautiful synthesis of pure fruit and great soil tones. The finish is very long, ripely tannic and impeccably balanced, with stunning complexity and focus and a vibrant, magical finish. Chambertin at its finest! 2028-2085. **97**.

Domaine Armand Rousseau (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Cyrielle Rousseau was in a very good mood at the time of my visit to taste the 2017s at Domaine Rousseau, as well she should have been, for the wines were showing beautifully and were amongst the stars of my trip in November. Mademoiselle Rousseau noted that the domaine had done a “very aggressive green harvest in 2017 to get the depth in the wines” and the results were truly stunning. When I asked Cyrielle Rousseau about her perceptions of the style of the vintage, she responded “perhaps a blend of 2014 and 2016”, but she observed that I had been visiting the domaine for a long time, so I might have an even better idea. One of the benefits of the ongoing maturation process? Keep in mind that the range of 2014s chez Rousseau were probably the wines of the vintage, and the 2016s are excellent, but my gut feeling is that the 2017s from Domaine Rousseau are probably going to be even better than either vintage! The domaine started harvesting in 2017 on September 5th and with malolactic fermentations on a fairly normal schedule, the cellar had been racked in late summer and was absolutely singing at the time of my visit in mid-November. The 2017s chez Rousseau are emblematic of the very best red wines of the vintage, combining a great depth of luxuriant, sappy and very pure fruit with stunningly precise fidelity to their underlying soil signatures, so that despite the absolutely beautiful fruit components in each and every wine, the wines show gorgeous “typicité” and are very much terroir-defined wines as well. It is a pretty magical combination. The 2017 fireworks here start very early, as the two villages level bottlings are truly exceptional this year, with an added element of mid-palate depth in 2017 that is not always apparent at this level. All of the premier and grand crus here share a beautiful sense of sappiness to their fruit tones, with lots of plummy elements, coupled to that telltale “raw cocoa” characteristic that is so prevalent in the very best red wines of the vintage. Across the board, they lack for nothing and are very much representative of their underlying terroir, which they express with great precision. The structural elements here are all suave, seamless and buried in the lovely fruit, but are present and this is not going to be a quick-maturing vintage chez Rousseau, but rather, a great classic year that will be ranked amongst the very, very best years here since the turn of the new millennium.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos du Château”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Clos du Château is beautifully red fruity this year, offering up a pure and sappy nose of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, mustard seed, dark soil tones and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite refined on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, good backend mineral drive and a long, moderately tannic and beautifully balanced finish. Very classy AC! 2023-2055+. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Gevrey AC was a touch reductive at the time of my visit (I know, I said every wine was singing!), but opened up nicely with just a bit of coaxing in the glass. The nose is precise and more black fruity in personality than the Clos du Château, delivering scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, a bit of grilled meats, woodsmoke, black minerality and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and even a bit more solid at the core than the Clos du Château, with fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and promising finish. This will need a couple more years in the cellar to blossom than the Clos du Château, but it is going to be another excellent village wine. 2025-2055+. **91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Lavaux St. Jacques from the Rousseau family is beautifully sappy and pure in this vintage and truly a lovely bottle in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a perfumed mélange of red plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, gamebird, a hint of mustard seed, lovely soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a lovely core of pure fruit, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and vibrant finish. Really refined juice. 2026-2065. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cazetiers”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Cazetiers is another perfectly balanced, pure and sappy example of the vintage. The bouquet offers up a fine blend of red and black cherries, red plums, lovely spice tones, a touch of grilled meats, dark soil tones, mustard seed, vanillin oak and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and complex, with a sappy core, a bit more early structure showing than the Lavaux, with ripe, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. 2026-2065. **92.**

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Armand Rousseau is another great vintage for this bottling, which has hit some superb high water marks in recent times, with 2005, 2010, 2014 and now 2017 a significant step up from what this bottling was capable of back in the decades of the 1980s or 1990s. The 2017 offers up a deep and nicely black fruity bouquet of black cherries, black plums, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, grilled meats, woodsmoke and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality this year, with a sappy core of dark fruit, ripe, seamless tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, very pure and complex finish. Another great vintage of Charmes *chez* Rousseau! 2029-2075+. **94.**

2017 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Mazy-Chambertin from the Rousseau family is another absolutely stellar young wine in the making, with a beautiful combination of classical Mazy minerality and the supreme elegance of the vintage both on display. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of sweet dark berries, bonfires, espresso, black minerality, raw cocoa, grilled venison and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off great mid-palate depth, with a powerful, but utterly refined profile, a sappy core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and a very, very long and nascently complex finish. A great bottle of Mazy. 2028-2075. **94.**

2017 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Clos de la Roche from Domaine Rousseau is another absolutely beautiful bottle in the making, with more early sex appeal on display than in either the Charmes or Mazy this year. The pure and seductive nose delivers a beautiful constellation of sappy red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a very complex base of soil, woodsmoke, a touch of violet and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and soil-driven, with beautifully fine-grained tannins, great focus and balance, exceptional complexity and grip and a very, very long and velvety finish. I love the lift here on the backend! 2027-2075. **94+**.

2017 Ruchottes-Chambertin “Clos des Ruchottes”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Clos des Ruchottes is a stunning young wine. The bouquet is very red fruity again, soaring from the glass in a blaze of red plums, red and black cherries, a touch of raspberry, raw cocoa, a very complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core, great transparency, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, very pure and complex finish. I love the combination here of supreme elegance, but with the volume and grip turned way up on the very energetic and precise finish. 2029-2080. **95+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Rousseau Clos St. Jacques was also showing beautifully, with a touch more of a reserved profile in mid-November, but coupled to great purity and perfume on the nose as well. The bouquet delivers a fairly primary and very, very promising combination of red and black cherries, plums, gamebird, a nice touch of sweet hazelnut (like one might find in a young vintage of Rostaing Côte Blonde), raw cocoa, a very, very complex base of soil and a sound base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and absolutely seamless, with great purity on the attack, a great core of fruit in reserve, superb soil signature and a very, very long, vibrant and ripely tannic finish. Great juice. 2027-2075+. **95+**.

2017 Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Chambertin from Domaine Rousseau is a magical wine. Recall that this was far more heavily-frosted in 2016 than was the case with the Clos de Bèze, so the pent up energy in the vines was channeled into great depth and concentration in the 2017, due to the Rousseau family reining in the yields earlier in the season. The perfumed nose soars from the glass in a complex blaze of plums, cherries, raspberries, grilled meats, cocoa powder, a glorious base of soil, woodsmoke and a suave foundation of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and beautifully sappy at the core, with stunning soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, very complex and utterly refined finish. I love the sense of reserve this wine shows on the palate right now, despite it being utterly seductive aromatically in its youthful grandeur. A brilliant wine in the making! 2032-2100. **98+**.

2017 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2017 Clos de Bèze from Domaine Rousseau is an equally compelling wine in the making, but it is a bit the inverse right now of the Chambertin, as it is a bit more reserved on its youthful nose, but more open and flamboyant on the palate. The bouquet is very, very pure, precise and promising, offering up scents of red and black raspberries, cherries, raw cocoa, a very complex base of minerality, lovely spice tones and a very well-done framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with superb transparency and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, very energetic and vibrant finish. The wine is already suave and caressing on the attack, with all of this sappy reserve at the core and yet, it finishes completely defined by its complex minerality. A great wine. 2030-2100. **98**.



Domaine Trapet Père et Fils (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Jean-Louis Trapet has made absolutely brilliant examples of the 2017 vintage, with the depth and structure of the most successful wines found in the Côte d'Or, coupled to great purity and sappiness of fruit and singing expressions of terroir. Jean-Louis and his team began picking on September 6th in 2017 and brought in grapes in ideal condition, with lovely ripeness of tannins and seeds and very good sugar levels. Much to my surprise, there was a new wine to taste in the Trapet cellars this year, which Jean-Louis has been producing from a cousin's parcel of vines in the climat of Meix Fringuet, which is a Côte de Nuits Villages bottling made from vines near Brochon. He has been making the wine since 2011, but as the parcel is small and yields have been so short in recent vintages, there was not enough wine to go around and Jean-Louis saw no reason to show the wine. However, with a normal crop load in 2017 (and again in 2018), the wine was happily added to our tasting lineup of the 2017s. The Domaine Trapet roster of 2017s was quite full this year, as the regular yields here allowed the premier crus of Petite Chapelle and Clos Prieur to be bottled on their own, rather than combined with the other family premier cru parcels to make a blended Gevrey "Premier Cru" with sufficient number of bottles to cover customers' orders. As the family's other premier crus are in Combottes, Ergots and Corbeaux (which comprise the domaine's "Capita" bottling), I mentioned to Jean-Louis how interesting it would be one year to taste all of them separately, and he smiled and pointed to three small new fermenters that he has now in the cuverie, which were purchased specifically to ferment and eventually bottle these three premier crus on their own. So, either in 2018 or 2019,

we will see the first releases of Combottes, Ergots and Corbeaux from Domaine Trapet, as the challenges of fermenting such small cuvées have now been solved. I am very much looking forward to trying them when the time comes! The first four wines listed below had been bottled just before the harvest of 2018, with most of them back in good form, but the Minima bottling still out of sorts from the mise and so I did not give the wine a score in its grumpy state. After those four wines, the Marsannay and Gevrey AC bottlings had already been racked into tank for bottling soon after my visit, and the rest of the lineup was still in cask and not yet racked. This is a very, very strong vintage for Jean-Louis Trapet and his 2017s are destined to compete with his 2010s and 2012s as some of the very finest wines of his career. Don't miss them!

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2017 Domaine Trapet Bourgogne Blanc was bounced back nicely from its end of August bottling and showed well. The nose offers up a good blend of apple, peach, lovely minerality and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full and nicely wide open in personality, with a good core, bright acids and impressive length and grip for its appellation. Good juice. 2018-2028. **88.**

2017 Marsannay Blanc- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Marsannay Blanc from the Trapet family was also nicely bounced back from bottling and showing quite well. The bouquet is open and juicy in personality, delivering scents of apple, a touch of quince, white soil tones, a touch of lees influence and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and vibrant, with a good core and fine length and bounce on the backend. 2018-2030. **88+.**

2017 Minima- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

This is the non-sulfur bottling from Jean-Louis and this wine was still quite grumpy post-bottling and I did not score it, as that would not have been fair to the wine. The nose is pretty and red fruity, offering up scents of strawberries, cherries, woodsmoke, soil and a touch of cherry skin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure in fruit tones and nicely transparent, with very little tannin and good length and grip. The focus here was missing in action from the *mise*, so I did not score the wine, but I am sure it will be quite good and drink well from the outset.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Domaine Trapet was in much better form than the Minima after its bottling, but still not fully recovered. The nose has excellent elements, offering up scents of red and black cherries, spices, a nice base of soil and a touch of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is medium-full, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature, a bit of ripe, backend tannin and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is still a tad agitated, but its quality is still quite clear. 2018-2030+. **88-89.**

2017 Côte de Nuits Villages “Meix Fringuet”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

This new (to me) bottling of Côte de Nuits Villages had been racked into tank, but was showing very well. These are vines that were planted in 1975 and had been farmed biodynamically for several years prior to Jean-Louis starting to oversee the vines and make the wine here in 2011. This is a really good wine, offering up a stylish bouquet of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, dark soil tones, a hint of fresh thyme and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is fullish, sappy at the core and nicely soil-driven, with a nice bit of backend tannin and impressive length and grip on the well-balanced and focused finish. Good juice. 2019-2035+. **89.**

2017 Marsannay- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I have always been a fan of Jean-Louis Marsannay bottling, and I discovered part of the reason during this visit, as he told me that these vines are now fully fifty years of age and planted on a very chalky topsoil over the base of limestone “mother rock”. The 2017 is an excellent example, offering up a deep and pure bouquet of red plums, red and black cherries, grilled meats, a touch of licorice, chalky soil tones, a bit of spice and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good core, a touch of backend tannin and very good length and grip on the gently spicy finish. This is very good juice and an outstanding value. 2021-2050. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2017 Gevrey AC from Domaine Trapet was also showing very well indeed at the time of my visit. The bouquet here is quite refined, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, a nice touch of spice and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep and suave on the attack, with a full and nicely meaty format, a good core, moderate tannins and an excellent backend structural chassis and fine length and grip. A superb AC. 2023-2055. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Ostrea”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The old vine Ostrea bottling was also showing lovely potential in 2017, with the classy nose delivering a fine constellation of red plums, black cherries, roasted meats, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, anise, a touch of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely purity and precision on the attack, a very good base of soil, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and vibrant finish. Fine, fine juice in the making and another very classy *villages*. 2023-2055+. **91**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Year in and year out, I love the Trapet family’s bottling of Petite Chapelle and the 2017 vintage has fashioned another stellar example. The bouquet is very pure and very precise, offering up scents of red and black cherries, incipient notes of Cuban cigar, a great base of complex soil tones, gamebird, raw cocoa, mustard seed, cedar and a touch of hazelnut in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very elegant on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, great soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and a very long, focused and nascently complex finish. All this lovely wine needs is some time in the cellar to blossom! 2025-2075. **93**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2017 Clos Prieur from Domaine Trapet is an absolute classic in the making. The already very complex bouquet is deep, pure and black fruity in personality, revealing scents of dark berries, black cherries, woodsmoke, black minerality, grilled meats, a touch of new leather, espresso, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is full, pure and shows off superb mid-palate depth, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, suave tannins and a long, tangy and soil-driven finish of excellent complexity and grip. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2027-2065. **92+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Capita”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

As I mentioned above, this bottling is composed of a blend of Combottes, Ergots and Corbeaux and the wine is exceptional in 2017. The aromatic constellation delivers a blend of red cherries, cassis, dark berries, grilled meats, black minerality, raw cocoa, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure on the attack, with an excellent core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and a very long, vibrant and complex finish of fine-grained tannins and excellent precision. Just outstanding. 2025-2065. **93**.

2017 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Of Jean-Louis' three grand crus in 2017, the Chapelle-Chambertin was the most reserved in personality at the time of my visit. With a bit of coaxing, the wine offers up scents of red and black cherries, gamebird, woodsmoke, mustard seed, raw cocoa, a great base of soil, hints of Cuban tobacco, cedar and a topnote of nutskin. On the palate the wine is pure, full and rock solid at the core, with a tightly-knit, ripely-tannic and very precise and promising finish. The length here is outstanding and the wine is both sappy and very soil-driven. There is little doubt it will be flat out great when it is ready to drink. 2028-2080+. **95+**.

2017 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2017 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Trapet is absolutely brilliant in this vintage and was a bit more open for inspection than the reclusive Chapelle. The bouquet is pure, already very complex and utterly refined, wafting from the glass in a blend of black plums, black cherries, Cuban cigar wrapper, bitter chocolate, mustard seed, a hint of fresh nutmeg, a complex base of dark soil tones and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and vibrant, with a lovely core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and a very long, complex and utterly suave finish. This is still a very young wine, but it is so beautifully balanced this year that one can easily imagine it being drunk in its relative youth. That said, I would try to give it at least a decade's worth of bottle age to allow its secondary layers to fully emerge. Great juice. 2028-2080+. **95+**.

2017 Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Like the Latricières, the Trapets' 2017 Chambertin was showing brilliantly at the time of my visit. This is a stunning example of this great *terroir*, offering up a pure and aristocratic aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, bitter chocolate, black plums, grilled meats, a very complex base of soil, mustard seed, a touch of anise and a fine base of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, structured and very, very complex, with a great core of fruit, stunning transparency, ripe, seamless tannins and great grip and focus on the very, very long, magical finish. One of the wines of the vintage! 2030-2100. **97+**.

Morey St. Denis

Domaine Dujac (Morey St. Denis)

The Domaine Dujac 2017s are excellent wines across the board, though this is one of those estates where the style between the négociant bottlings and the wines produced from domaine-grown fruit is noticeable, with more depth and structure found in the domaine wines this year. Of course, this is quite understandable, as several of the growers that the domaine purchases grapes from for their Dujac Fils et Père bottlings were amongst the hardest hit by frost damage in 2016, so human nature would dictate that more generous yields in 2017 were not going to be denied where there were so few bunches to sell the year before. My timing of the November visit was not ideal, as the domaine wines had all been racked two weeks prior to my tasting the wines and they were in varying stages of recovery from this. As Morey St. Denis had been spared the frost damage of 2016, there was no concerted effort in the village to burn damp hay bales here in late April of 2017, but despite the lack of heavy smoke, the vines were able to avoid frost damage on that one cold night and yields were good here in 2017, but not anywhere out of the ordinary, as there was not the same pent up energy from very low yields the previous year in most of the Dujac parcels of vines. Picking started here in 2017 on August 28th for the domaine's white wines in Puligny, with the red grape harvest getting rolling on September 5th. There is a new wine in the Domaine Dujac cellars in 2017, which is a négociant bottling from

the fine premier cru vineyard of Les Cras in Nuits St. Georges. The first vintage contracted for by the Seysses family had been in 2016, but the parcel was hit very hard by frost and not commercialized, so the 2017 is the inaugural vintage for this very good wine. Jeremy Seysses reported that the malolactic fermentations in the cellars this year were quite normal in their timing, with pretty much everything finishing up by the end of March or early April of 2018, so there was not the same phenomenon of very early malos for the 2017s here as was the case in some cellars in this vintage. Given the various stages of recovery from racking of the wines in the cellar this year, I have scored wines that were still grumpy in their post-racking phase within a range, while those that were fully bounced back receive more precise scores (to the best of my ability anyway!). 2017 is clearly a great vintage for Domaine Dujac for their own estate-bottled wines, and still quite good for the more forward, but silky and stylish négociant bottlings sold under the Dujac Fils et Père label.



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

Vins Rouges

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2017 Dujac Fils et Père bottling of Chambolle is a pretty and already quite silky wine, but it is a bit easy-going from the yields of the vintage. The bouquet offers up a stylish mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and quite generous on the attack, with respectable depth at the core, a

touch of tannin and good length and bounce on the tasty finish. This will offer pleasure from the outset, but does not have quite its customary stuffing in 2017. 2018-2040. **88.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2017 *négociant* bottling of Gevrey AC has a bit more mid-palate density than the Chambolle. The wine is nicely precise aromatically, delivering scents of red and black cherries, a nice touch of meatiness, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, soil and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and has a nice touch of sap at the core, with good soil signature, suave tannins and good length and grip on the properly structured young finish. This is a very good AC. 2019-2045. **90.**

2017 Morey St. Denis- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2017 Morey St. Denis AC bottling from Dujac Fils et Père was a bit more reserved on both the nose and palate than the Gevrey and Chambolle, but was showing good potential as well. The bouquet reluctantly yields up scents of plums, dark berries, espresso, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, closed and rather grumpy about being disturbed, but with a good core, ripe tannins and very good focus and balance on the long and adolescent finish. I am sure this will be quite good, but it was not yet bounced back at the time of my visit. 2021-2045. **89-90.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2017 Nuits *villages* bottling from Dujac Fils et Père is also going to be quite good in this vintage, but shares a more forward personality with some of the other *négociant* bottlings this year. The bouquet is a mix of cherries, nutskin, venison, a good base of soil, woodsmoke, fresh herbs and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, open and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a solid core and good length and grip on the moderately tannic, complex finish. This does not have the mid-palate stuffing to make old bones, but once it blossoms properly a few years down the line, it will be quite a tasty drink. 2023-2050+. **89+.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Dujac Fils et Père

The inaugural release of Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras” from Dujac Fils et Père is very good indeed. Jeremy Seysses is not certain of the exact age of the vines here, but notes “that they are certainly older than fifty years of age.” There are seven *pièces* of Cras in the cellars this year, so this wine will have some availability and will certainly be quite rewarding for those intrepid enough to search out a Dujac Nuits St. Georges premier cru. The bouquet is lovely, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, nutskin, gamebird, coffee, woodsmoke, a fine base of chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite refined structurally (particularly for young Nuits), with a fine core of fruit, lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and good bounce and grip on the long and vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2025-2065. **92.**

2017 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 domaine bottling of Morey AC is also very good, but it is still a bit agitated post-racking and I scored it within a range as a result. The bouquet is more precise than the palate right now, as it wafts from the glass in a fine mix of plums, red and black cherries, dark soil tones, raw cocoa and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and has very good depth at the core, with fine focus and grip, moderate tannins and a long finish. I am sure this will be quite good. 2023-2060. **89-90+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Dujac

Jeremy and his team were able to do a bit of green harvest in their own parcels of Chambolle *villages* and the wine has turned out with quite a bit more mid-palate sappiness than

the *négociant* version in 2017. This is going to be an excellent village wine, as it offers up a lovely bouquet of red plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and classy finish. 2023-2060. **90+**.

2017 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru”- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Morey Premier Cru bottling was in fine form at the time of my visit, soaring from the glass in a very expressive blend of red cherries, pomegranate, complex, chalky soil tones, cocoa power, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and nicely sappy at the core, with excellent transparency, suave, refined tannins and a long, precise and complex finish. This is very classy juice in 2017! 2025-2065+. **92+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Gruenchers”- Domaine Dujac

I was very happy to see the Gruenchers back in the lineup in 2017, after the severe frost damage here in 2016, but sorry to see it so grumpy after its racking! The bouquet is still rather recalcitrant post-racking, but eventually delivers a mélange of red berries, red plums, raw cocoa, chalky soil, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine’s purity is certainly apparent, despite its unsettled nature, with its full-bodied and nicely tangy format offering up good depth at the core and fine-grained tannins on the long finish. I am sure this is going to be very good indeed, but it just wanted to be left alone on the day of my visit. 2026-2060+. **91-92+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Dujac

Underlining the variations in the Dujac cellars a few weeks out from their racking, the 2017 Combottes was absolutely singing at the time of my visit! The bouquet is pure, refined and utterly charming, wafting from the glass in an elegant mix of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil, gamebird, a dollop of mustard seed and a suave base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, transparent and sappy at the core, with suave tannins, great focus and grip and a very long, vibrant and complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2065+. **93**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Dujac

The Domaine Dujac 2017 Beaumonts was also very much on form after its racking and is clearly going to be a terrific example of the vintage. The refined aromatic constellation delivers scents of raspberries, black cherries, dark soil tones, gamebird, raw cocoa, a touch of bonfire and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and supremely elegant this year, with a sappy core, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully balanced finish. A fine, fine example of Beaumonts! 2026-2065. **93**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Malconsorts *chez* Seysses is a bit more reserved in personality than the lovely Beaumonts, but it too was in good form at the time of my visit and was showing all of its inherent potential. The bouquet is a refined blend of red and black raspberries, plums, duck, a complex base of minerality, raw cocoa and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and refined, with a lovely core, ripe tannins and a long, youthful and tangy finish of excellent focus and grip. All this beauty needs is time! 2027-2070. **93+**.

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Echézeaux from Domaine Dujac is a superb wine in the making, as this wine displays the sappy depth and gorgeous transparency of the very finest examples of the vintage. The lovely, red fruity nose wafts from the glass in a refined mix of raspberries, cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, a very complex base of soil tones, gamebird, Vosne spices and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and marvelously sappy at the core, with

great soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very long, vibrant and laser-like finish. I love the combination of elegance and sappy generosity that this wine hints at and will deliver down the road. 2028-2075+. **94+**.

2017 Clos St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

The domaine's 2017 Clos St. Denis is utterly classic in profile and is going to be a superb wine. The refined, nascently complex and very precise bouquet delivers scents of cherries, raspberries, red plums, complex soil tones, a touch of cocoa powder, mustard seed, gamebird and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and very transparent in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, suave, seamless tannins and a very long, tangy and precise finish. A marvelous vintage of this most iconic of Clos St. Denis bottlings! 2027-2075+. **95**.

2017 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Dujac

I always have a sweet spot in my heart for the Domaine Dujac Clos St. Denis, but in 2017, even I have to admit that the beautiful Clos de la Roche is a step up! The bouquet is flamboyant and sappy this year, soaring from the glass in a great blend of cherries, red plums, a touch of blood orange, cocoa powder, a very complex base of soil, woodsmoke, roses and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with great soil signature, refined focus and grip, perfect balance and huge, stunning backend energy on the long and ripely tannic finish. A great, great vintage of Clos de la Roche! 2028-2080+. **97**.

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

When Jeremy moved from the Echézeaux to the Clos St. Denis in our tasting progression, I asked why the Charmes was going to be served out of its customary place in the rotation. He responded that "I really, really like the Charmes this year and we will see if my faith in the wine has been misplaced." However, not surprisingly, when we got to the wine, Jeremy's impressions were vindicated and the wine showed stellar potential- even hard on the heels of the great Clos de la Roche! The bouquet is pure and simply outstanding in 2017, offering up scents of red and black cherries, black plums, a very complex base of soil, gentle meatiness, woodsmoke, raw cocoa and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and rock solid at the core with sappy fruit, excellent focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very long, soil-driven and complex finish. I am not sure I have ever tasted a better young vintage of Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Dujac. 2027-2075. **95**.

2017 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Dujac

After several grand crus in the lineup that were simply singing, the 2017 Dujac Bonnes-Mares was a bit grumpier and not fully back on form after its recent racking. There is clearly a great wine lurking in wait here, but patience will be needed. With some coaxing, the wine offers up a sappy blend of red and black cherries, red plums, gamebird, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, closed and rock solid at the core, with lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very primary finish. I am sure this is going to be a great wine, but I did not catch it on the best of days. 2029-2080. **94-95+**.

2017 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Romanée-St.-Vivant from Domaine Dujac was in a similar stage of development to the Bonnes-Mares and not all that happy about being disturbed. Again, with some prompting, the wine offers up scents of red plums, red and black cherries, chocolate, duck, fresh nutmeg, musky floral tones and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and reserved in personality, with a sappy core, fine soil signature, suave tannins and great length and grip on the tangy and youthful finish. 2029-2080. **95-97**.

2017 Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

It is possible that the 2017 vintage will be the last one that Domaine Dujac produces a bottling of Chambertin, as negotiations are ongoing with the owner of this parcel of vines and were not going particularly well according to Jeremy Seysses. If it turns out that the 2017 vintage is the last Dujac Chambertin, at least the domaine is going out on a high note, as the wine shows stunning potential. The bouquet is pure and nicely precise, jumping from the glass in a refined blend of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, a very complex base of soil tones, gamebird, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and a bit more grumpy than the nose suggests, with a lovely core of fruit, great soil complexity, fine-grained tannins and a very long, absolutely complete finish. This was not entirely on form, but its future brilliance was manifest. 2030-2080+. **96-97.**

Vins Blancs

2017 Morey St. Denis Blanc- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Morey *villages* Blanc spent twelve months in cask and then was racked into cement eggs to finish up its *elevage*. The wine was showing well and quite forward and easy-going structurally, offering up a bright bouquet of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with good complexity, a juicy core and good grip and length on the wide open and succulent finish. Good juice that will offer plenty of early appeal. 2018-2030. **89,**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “les Folatières”- Dujac Fils et Père

Jeremy Seysses used ten to fifteen percent new oak for his two Puligny premier crus in 2017. The Folatières was showing very good potential at the time of my visit (albeit a bit grumpy), wafting from the glass in a fine mix of apple, white peach, beeswax, chalky soil tones, a touch of fresh almond, spring flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and quite bouncy, with a good core, bright acids and fine length and grip on the long and wide open finish. This will charm right from the outset. 2018-2040. **91-92.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “les Combettes”- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2017 Combettes from the Seysses family was more content to be tasted than the Folatières at the time of my visit and was showing beautiful promise. The bouquet is pure, refined and very classy, delivering scents of apple, pear, almond, chalky minerality, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with excellent cut and grip and a long, focused and energetic finish. This is really lovely in 2017. 2020-2045. **93.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “les Monts Luisants” Blanc- Domaine Dujac

The 2017 Monts Luisants Blanc from Domaine Dujac is another very good wine in the making. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy blend of apple, pear, fresh almond, chalky minerality, a nice touch of bee pollen and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and quite shapely, with a fine core of fruit, good cut and grip and a long, vibrant and zesty finish. This is lovely. 2018-2040. **92.**

Domaine des Lambrays (Morey St. Denis)

This was my first visit to Clos des Lambrays since the retirement of the long-time director here, Thierry Brouin. As I mentioned last year, I had the pleasure meet and taste with the new Régisseur, Boris Champy, alongside of Monsieur Brouin when we went through their lovely 2016s and was very warmly received this year by Monsieur Champy to taste the 2017s here.

Monsieur Champy and the new owners of Clos des Lambrays have very high aspirations for their domaine and I expect that the attention to detail in the coming years is going to be as high as it ever was under the long and very successful tenure of Monsieur Brouin, while each and every aspect of the wine-growing process will be considered in its entirety in an effort to take what is already a superb domaine and push it to even higher levels of quality, if these can be realized. Of course, this ambition is somewhat of a double-edged sword in today's wine world, as one starts to wonder what is to be changed and how, to make even better wines at what has been a superstar domaine for a couple of decades already. There are some examples in the world of wine where such ambition have led to even better wines over time (perhaps Château Pichon-Lalande or Domaine William Fèvre might be a good examples in recent years), but there are others, where this ambition has not necessarily led to superior wines (Mayacamas Vineyards or Domaine d'Eugénie?) and one wonders what criteria will eventually be utilized to try and push the Domaine des Lambrays to even higher places in the years to come? One of the components of winemaking that is often adjusted for wines aspiring to higher rungs on the greatness ladder is the new oak component, as it seems that fancier tonneliers or perhaps more new oak is often one of the elements that are tweaked early on by new owners looking for greater recognition in the world of luxury wines. I do not know if Monsieur Champy has considered this direction or not, but I did note that the Clos des Lambrays in 2017 was raised in fifty percent new oak and fifty percent "one wine" casks this year. I do not know if this is a departure from previous years here (the 2016 was also raised in half new oak, but I have no details on what the older barrels were in the blend), but the wine did seem a touch more new oaky in personality out of barrel this year, so perhaps the percentage of new oak is similar to previous years, but the older barrels used are not quite as old as they were previously?

In any case, the 2017s here showed very well indeed and were not stylistically out of line with the superb vintages crafted here in recent times, so perhaps my worrying about the future is not at all merited. Monsieur Champy and his team started harvesting on September 2nd in 2017 and brought in their last grapes (from their Morey AC parcels) on September 11th. The Morey villages bottling was still in cask at the time of my visit (but destined for racking the following week), the premier cru les Loups was already in tank and the grand vin was still in barrel. The Clos des Lambrays 2017 included ninety percent whole clusters in this vintage and the les Loups included fifty percent. The red wines at Domaine des Lambrays were deep, pure, nicely structured and beautifully defined by their soil elements and cut from the stylistic cloth of the most successful red wines of the vintage. The two superb Puligny premier crus were not quite as structured as the reds (or as some of the more tensile 2017 whites from a few other domaines in the Côte de Beaune), but pure, focused and succulent, with a fine synthesis of ripe fruit and beautiful underlying soil elements. They seem likely to drink with distinction right from the start, but also age very nicely on their superior sense of balance. All in all, it is an outstanding first vintage of Monsieur Champy flying solo at Domaine des Lambrays and will make long-time fans of the estate very happy indeed.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet "Folatières"- Domaine des Lambrays

The 2017 Puligny-Montrachet "Folatières" from Domaine des Lambrays was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up a ripe and vibrant nose of almond, white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very well balanced, with sound framing acids, good focus and grip, a lovely

core and a long, classy and wide open finish. This will drink very well from release, but has the balance to also age quite gracefully. 2018-2045. **92.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos des Caillerets”- Domaine des Lambrays

The 2017 Clos des Caillerets from Monsieur Champy is another excellent wine, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a ripe blend of apple, white peach, chalky minerality, fresh almond, a hint of *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and complex, with good acids, fine focus and grip, a lovely core and a long, bouncy and quite classy finish. 2018-2045. **92+.**

2017 Morey St. Denis- Domaine des Lambrays

The 2017 Morey *villages* was a touch reductive at the time of my visit during the first week of November, but was to be racked almost immediately after. With a bit of swirling, the wine opens up nicely to display scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, venison, a touch of juniper berry, espresso and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, nascently complex and nicely soil-driven, with suave tannins, good focus and grip and a long, tangy finish. This will be very good juice. 2022-2045+. **90.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “les Loups” Premier Cru- Domaine des Lambrays

The 2017 les Loups from Domaine des Lambrays was showing very well indeed at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a beautiful and already quite complex combination of dark berries, black cherries, a touch of heather, coffee, dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very elegant in profile, with a nice touch of sappiness at the core, ripe, seamless tannins, excellent focus and balance and a long, refined and very promising finish. 2023-2060+. **92.**

2017 Clos des Lambrays- Domaine des Lambrays

The 2017 Clos des Lambrays was still quite youthful, but was showing truly stunning potential on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is still fairly primary, but sports outstanding depth and nascent complexity in its constellation of cassis, black cherries, sweet dark berries, exotic touches of both eucalyptus and lavender, a superb base of soil, heather and a sound foundation of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and suave on the attack, with sappy core, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, closed and classy finish. The oak component here is beautifully done and there are absolutely no issues with the wine’s ultimate balance, but I had the sensation that it was clamping down on the wine a bit more than was customary for Clos des Lambrays at this point in its evolution. Perhaps it was just my imagination, as the wine will no doubt be absolutely superb in the fullness of time. 2027-2085. **95.**

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

Laurent Lignier has fashioned another absolutely stellar range of wines in the 2017 vintage and these are, once again, amongst the finest reds to be found anywhere in the Côte d’Or. The 2017 harvest here started here on the 8th of September and was completed six days later, on the 14th of the month. Potential yields here varied quite a bit, depending on how the frost patterns of 2016 had hit Monsieur Lignier’s vineyards (remember, there was almost no frost in Morey in 2016), but the domaine was vigilant and made sure that none of the parcels that had been frosted in 2016 were overly productive in the following vintage, so there are no variations here in terms of mid-palate depth or structural integrity. He noted that he varied his use of whole clusters a bit in 2017, depending on the quality of the stems, so some wines were completely destemmed, while others might have included twenty to twenty-five percent whole

bunches, if the stems looked very good. As always, the use of new oak was quite moderate in 2017, allowing the wines to really shine in their relative expressions of terroir. The hail on July 10th did hit the family's parcel in Combottes, which reduced the yields here by a third in 2017. Most of the malos in the cellar here were very typical in their schedules in 2017, with most of the wines done with their secondary fermentations between the end of January and mid-February of the following year. However, there were a few outliers that took until the summer of 2018 to finish up (I have noted which wines these were below). Like all of the very top cellars of red Burgundies in 2017, the Lignier cellars are loaded this year with wines of absolutely beautiful, sappy and pure fruit tones, coupled with great transparency down to their underlying soil signatures. The tannins here are suave, seamless and buried in the inner structural elements of the wines, but always supplying a good chassis for long-term aging and the Domaine Lignier 2017s, for the most part, are not going to be particularly early-drinking wines. But, across the board, they are very elegant and soil-driven examples of the vintage that just happen to have stunningly pure fruit tones and will be ranked up there with other recent classic vintages from the Lignier family. Several of the wines reminded me fairly strongly of their 2010s, while others were even more sappy and potentially seductive. The 2017 vintage chez Lignier is absolutely stellar and these will be worth a special search to finding the market, with the village level wines offering just as much personality and great vintage character as the higher appellations in 2017.



Laurent Lignier at the tasting table in his family's very comfortable gîte in Morey St. Denis.

2017 Bourgogne “Plain Gilbert”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

There are two distinct Bourgogne bottlings *chez* Lignier these days, with the Plain Gilbert bottling produced from the parcel of vines in Chambolle. This wine had been bottled fifteen days before our mid-November tasting, but was still showing quite nicely, offering up a lovely nose of red plums, cherries, roses, a fine touch of soil and a bit of nuttiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep and quite full for Bourgogne, with a nice touch of backend tannin and pretty good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. A very good example. 2021-2035. **88.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 Chambolle old vine cuvée was one hundred percent destemmed in this vintage and raised in twenty percent new casks. These vines average fifty-five years of age these days, with the old vine sappiness nicely amplified by the vintage’s character on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely and very pure blend of red plums, red and black cherries, a touch of cocoa, mustard seed, soil and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, refined and nicely structured, with a good core of red fruit, fine soil signature, lovely focus and grip and a long, precise and promising finish. 2023-2055. **89+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “la Bussière”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

La Bussière is one of the more interesting *climats* in Chambolle, as it lies right on the Morey border and the premier cru of Clos de la Bussière is right across the boundary. For those interested, this is also the *climat* where Domaine Dujac’s own Chambolle AC bottling comes from. Laurent Lignier’s 2017 version included twenty percent whole clusters this year and is really a lovely, precise and elegantly sappy wine, offering up a fine nose of red and black cherries, gamebird, lovely minerality, raw cocoa, mustard seed and a whisper of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, refined and quite sappy at the core, with excellent transparency, suave tannins and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This is an excellent *villages* in the making. 2022-2055. **91.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Trés Girard bottling from Monsieur Lignier is made from purchased grapes and was completely destemmed in 2017. The wine is very pretty, wafting from the glass in a wide open mix of red and black cherries, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, raw cocoa, mustard seed and a bit of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, sappy and nicely balanced, with very good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, promising finish. Good juice. 2022-2055. **90+.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Trilogie”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 Morey “Trilogie” is a step up from the very good Trés Girard, as the vines here are older (fifty to eighty years of age) and Monsieur Lignier was able to use twenty-five percent whole clusters for this cuvée. The bouquet is bright and very precise, delivering a fine constellation of plums, red and black cherries, a nice touch of spice from the stems, complex soil tones, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of cocoa powder. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full-bodied, with a very elegant profile, a lovely core, fine soil signature and a long, sappy and complex finish of suave tannins and impressive grip and bounce. 2022-2055. **91+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “La Justice”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

As I have mentioned in the past, I really love the *terroir* of La Justice and find it one of the most elegant *climats* for Gevrey AC bottlings. Monsieur Lignier used one new cask out of three and a half for this wine in 2017 and included no whole clusters. The bouquet is refined and red fruity, jumping from the glass in a fine mix of cherries, strawberries, a nice touch of grilled meats, a lovely base of soil, mustard seed, cedar and a hint of orange zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, open and transparent in personality, with a good,

solid core of fruit, fine focus and grip, moderate tannins and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This does not quite have the exceptional mid-palate stuffing of the Trilogie this year, but it is a lovely *villages*. 2021-2050+. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “le Reniard”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The *lieu à dit* of le Reniard is across the RN74 from aux Etelois (which lies below Griotte and Petite Chapelle on the slope) and has been the home to the Lignier family’s parcels for their Gevrey AC bottling for many years. However, 2017 will be the first vintage where the name of the *climat* is included on the label. The wine is excellent in this vintage, offering up a bright and complex bouquet of cherries, beetroot, a touch of plums, dark soil tones, mustard seed, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, balanced and energetic finish. This will need six or seven years to really start to peak, but is going to be an outstanding *villages*. 2023-2055+. **91+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Seuvrées”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The *lieu à dit* of les Seuvrées also lies on the opposite side of the RN74 from the slope of premier and grand cru vineyards, but it is very well-situated on the Morey border, and much of its border across the road is with Mazoyrès-Chambertin. The 2017 from Laurent Lignier is another outstanding village wine, offering up a pure and complex bouquet of red and black cherries, mustard seed, complex soil tones, gamebird, a bit of cocoa, refined soil elements and a gentle framing of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely purity on the attack, plenty of soil signature, suave tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Another truly exceptional Gevrey AC. 2024-2055+. **91+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Poisets”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 les Poisets includes twenty-five percent whole clusters this year and is a superb Nuits *villages*. The bouquet is deep and very precise, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of roasted black cherries, gamebird, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, a nice touch of spice from the stems, gently savory elements and a bit of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, soil-driven and quite elegant in structural chassis, with a fine core of fruit, lovely soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Laurent noted that this wine was one of the few to have a fairly late malo, as it finished up in June, so the wine was a bit behind the others in evolution and may well be hiding a bit of the sappiness that is so much on display in the other *villages* level wines this year. In any event, this is going to be excellent. 2025-2060. **91+**.

2017 Pommard “En Brescul”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 Pommard “En Brescul” from Laurent Lignier was the last wine to finish up its malo, waiting until August of 2018 to do so. The wine was still quite on form by mid-November (once a touch of reduction was swirled away), offering up a precise and promising nose of black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, bonfire, venison, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in personality, with a fine core, good soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2025-2060. **91**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Chabiots”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

There was no Chabiots *chez* Lignier in 2016, due to the frost damage, but the 2017 is very pretty and seems intent on making up for its having been missing from the lineup a year ago. The wine was entirely destemmed this year and one of the three casks were new. The wine delivers a beautifully pungent and quintessentially Chambolle nose of cherries, beetroot, mustard

seed, chalky soil tones, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is suave, full-bodied and very elegant in personality, with a sappy core, lovely mineral drive, refined tannins and a long, complex and beautifully lifted finish. Really lovely juice. 2025-2065+. **92+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 les Baudes has a bit of whole clusters this year, so there is some of that nice early spice elements from the inclusion of the stems. The bouquet is flat out great right out of the blocks, jumping from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, complex soil tones, mustard seed, woodsmoke, the aforementioned stem spice tones and a touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and tangy finish. This is more structured than the Chabiots (Baudes is next to Bonnes-Mares after all) and will need a few more years in the cellar to start to blossom, but it will be an outstanding and very elegant example of its *terroir* in the fullness of time. 2027-2075. **93**.

2017 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 la Riotte from Laurent Lignier is an excellent wine in the making, offering up a very precise bouquet of cherries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird, espresso and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent, with a good core, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. The personality of la Riotte is always a combination of bright red fruit and dark soil tones and the 2017 from Domaine Lignier is a perfect example of this beautiful mosaic of fruit and soil. This was made with twenty percent whole clusters in this vintage. 2022-2060. **92**.

2017 Morey St. Denis “les Chaffots”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 les Chaffots also has a bit of whole clusters in it this year, in this case twenty-five percent. This seems to be one of the best young examples of Chaffots I have had the pleasure to taste from the Lignier family, as the wine soars from the glass in a fine aromatic blend of red and black cherries, vinesmoke, venison, a very complex base of soil, mustard seed, stem spice and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite sappy at the core, with excellent focus and balance, ripe tannins and a long, poised and very promising finish. Chaffots is not always the most elegant premier cru out of the blocks, but this is not the case with this very refined 2017 version. 2027-2065+. **93**.

2017 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes bottling in 2017 is very refined and elegant out of the blocks, beautifully reflecting the style of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, venison, coffee, a touch of nutskin, a complex base of soil, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure on the attack and complex, with a fine core, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very long, pure and potentially sappy finish. A baby Clos de la Roche this year. 2027-2075. **93+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Domaine Lignier Combottes is outstanding, though there are only three casks this year, due to the hail in July. The wine includes twenty-five percent whole clusters and one of the barrels was new this year. The wine delivers superb aromatic complexity right out of the blocks, delivering scents of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil, just a touch of mustard seed, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full, focused and refined in profile, with ripe, suave tannins, lovely lightness of step and intensity of flavor, excellent focus and a long, soil-driven and supremely elegant finish. Just lovely wine that will have an ethereal element to it in the fullness of time. 2027-2075. **94**.



Nice place for a tasting? The very comfortable living room at Domaine Lignier's gîte in Morey St. Denis.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Didiers”- Hospices de Nuits (Dom. Hubert Lignier Père et Fils)

This fine Hospices de Nuits bottling, which Laurent buys every year, is always a bit of an outlier stylistically compared to the other Lignier wines, as the fairly heavily-toasted new oak that the Hospices uses for its wines sticks out a bit with the other wines in the cellar. But, despite it being a bit out of the norm here, it is always a very well done wine and the 2017 is no exception. The bouquet is a fine, black fruity blend of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and smoky oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a fine core of fruit, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, poised and very promising finish. This wine will need time to properly blossom, but it is going to be very good in due course. 2028-2065+. **92.**

2017 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier's superb 2017 Griotte was completely destemmed this year. The wine was showing beautifully in mid-November, offering up a pure and perfumed bouquet of cherries, blood orange, a touch of beetroot, chalky minerality, gentle meatiness, mustard seed and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, focused and sappy at the core, with outstanding mineral drive, excellent focus and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very, very long, pure and classy finish. Great Griotte that will take its time unfurling completely, but will wave proudly from the peak for many, many decades once it is ready to drink. 2030-2080. **94+.**

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2017 Charmes from Domaine Lignier included twenty percent whole clusters this year and was raised in a very civilized, one-third new oak. The wine is flat out beautiful on both the nose and palate, with the expressive bouquet offering up scents of red and black cherries, a nice touch of dark berry, beautiful spice tones, grilled meats, complex soil tones, cedar and an exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and shows off superb mid-palate depth, with fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip and a fine sense of reserve out of the blocks that augurs beautifully for its future. Great juice. 2027-2075+. **95.**

2017 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier's Clos de la Roche was also raised in one third new oak in 2017 and included twenty percent whole clusters. It is one of the most beautiful wines of the vintage, as it delivers a refined and sappy aromatic constellation of black cherries, black plums, a very complex base of soil, spit-roasted venison, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with the vintage's sappy core of fruit, great transparency, suave, refined tannins and a very, very long and promising finish that closes with outstanding energy and grip. This is a young puppy, but it will reward patience with unbridled beauty. 2030-2090. **96+.**

Domaine Ponsot (Morey St. Denis)

Rose-Marie Ponsot and Alexandre Abel are very happy with how the 2017 vintage is evolving in the cellars at Domaine Ponsot. This is the first vintage at the family domaine without any input from Laurent Ponsot, who has started his own domaine, so there was a sense of new ground being broken here with the 2017s. Monsieur Abel noted that the yields at the domaine were not particularly large in 2017 (in contrast to much of the Côte d'Or), as for the most part, vineyards in Morey St. Denis had avoided frost damage in 2016, and so there was not the same pent up energy in the vines as was the case where frost damage was severe the year before. Picking started here on September 11th of 2017 for the Saint Romain Blanc, and for the reds on the fifteenth of the month with the Bourgogne rouge. Monsieur Abel noted that the red wines were quite quick with their malolactic fermentations this year, with one or two exceptions, and most had finished up their malos by the end of February or very early March. With the white wines chez Ponsot, the malos were a bit later, with the Saint Romain completing this in August, the Corton-Charlemagne a touch earlier and the Clos des Monts Luisants still in the midst of malo at the time of my visit in early November. The wines were showing splendidly on the 5th of November when I stopped by, with the red wines deep, fresh and quite soil-driven in personality, with lovely, suave tannins, excellent precision on both the nose and palate and quite fine-grained tannins. Monsieur Abel equates them a bit with the 2008 vintage, though he is quick to point out that he feels the 2017s will end up superior to the 2008s, as they have a bit more depth of fruit and more refined structures. He noted that the wines "were pretty, but not really deep last spring, but they have been putting on weight since that time and I feel it is quite clear that this is another excellent vintage- perhaps somewhere between 2014 and 2015 in quality." The only red wine in the cellar that was lagging a bit in its evolution from a late-finishing malo was the Clos Vougeot, which had only finished up this fermentation the week before my visit and still had a touch of CO2 on the palate. But, all the other red wines were in fine form and really showed excellent potential in 2017 and this is clearly going to be a very top vintage from Domaine Ponsot. As I mentioned in the introduction, picking was quite early for the red wines chez Ponsot this year, with the first pinot noir grapes brought in on the 15th of September and the last on the

18th of the month. For the white wines, the domaine traditionally picks their very old vine Aligoté bottling from the Clos des Monts Luisants in Morey St. Denis quite a bit later than their pinot noir, and this was again the case in the Clos this year, as the younger vine parcel was picked on September 21st and the old vines here on the 26th of the month.

Vins Blancs

2017 Saint-Romain “Cuvée de la Mésange” Blanc- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Saint-Romain Blanc from Domaine Ponsot was showing very nicely at the time of my visit, offering up a quite vibrant nose of apple, quince, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of fresh almond and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, bright and zesty, with a good core and fine focus, length and grip on the wide open finish. Good juice. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Clos des Monts Luisants” Blanc- Domaine Ponsot

The constituent components of the Clos des Monts Luisants blanc were still finishing up malo at the time of my visit, so it was hard to get a precise read on the wine, but when all three parts were assembled in an approximation in the glass, its eventual quality was quite evident. The blend offers up a classic nose of quince, apple, chalky minerality, dried flowers and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with lovely focus and grip, a good core and lovely backend mineral drive on the long and zesty finish. This will be a very good vintage for this bottling. 2021-2055. **91-92+.**

2017 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Ponsot is a lovely wine in the making, with a fairly forward personality for this grand cru, but still fine mineral drive and grip. The bouquet is stylish and complex, offering up scents of apple, pear a hint of honeycomb, chalky soil tones and a nice touch of nuttiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and complexity, bright acids and a long, fairly open and promising finish. This will not need too many years in the cellar to fully blossom and really start to drink well. 2021-2045+. **92+.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Bourgogne rouge from Domaine Ponsot is quite a good example, delivering a fine nose of black cherries, cassis, woodsmoke, venison and dark soil. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, suave and nicely sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, a touch of tannin and good balance on the quite long finish. Good juice. 2018-2035. **88.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Cuvée des Grives”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Morey St. Denis “Cuvée des Grives” chez Ponsot is quite precise and sappy in personality in this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of black cherries, woodsmoke, a refined base of soil and an almost Gevrey sense of meatiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sappy, with fine soil signature, good complexity, suave tannins and a long, open and classy finish. 2018-2045. **90+.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “1er Cru” Cuvée des Alouettes- Domaine Ponsot

I had never realized this before, but the Cuvée des Alouettes bottling from the Ponsot family is entirely from fruit in the Clos des Monts Luisants vineyard, but the family prefers to use the name of the vineyard solely for their white wine from this *climat*. The pinot vines here are thirty years of age and really starting to come into their prime. The 2017 version is excellent,

delivering superb aromatic constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy with pure fruit at the core, with good soil signature, refined tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. This will want a few years in the cellar to soften up more completely and allow its secondary layers to emerge. 2023-2060. **92.**



Alexandre Abel and Rose-Marie Ponsot in the domaine's cellars in Morey St. Denis.

2017 Corton “Cuvée de Bourdon”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Domaine Ponsot Corton was showing excellent potential at the time of my visit. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of red and black cherries, lovely Corton spice elements, stony minerality, game, dark chocolate, mustard seed and a topnote of coriander. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved structurally, with a fine core of fruit, good mineral drive, ripe, well-integrated tannins and impressive length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This will be a very good bottle in the fullness of time. 2027-2075. **92+.**

2017 Clos de Vougeot “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Ponsot

Of all the red wines in the cellars at Domaine Ponsot, the Clos Vougeot was the slowest to finish up its malolactic fermentation, as this had just ended a week or so before my visit, and the wine was not entirely happy to be tasted. There are very good elements here on both the nose and palate, though the wine is still obviously out of sorts, with the bouquet offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, *pigeon*, bitter chocolate and a complex base of soil. On the palate the

wine is deep, full-bodied, long and quite energetic in personality, with a sappy core, ripe tannins and a long finish. There is still a bit of gas on the palate here and obviously, the wine has not snapped back into focus so soon after its malo, but the constituent components here are strong and I am sure this will be a very good wine in due course. 2027-2075. **92-93.**

2017 Chambertin- Domaine Ponsot

While the Clos Vougeot was still grumpy, the 2017 Chambertin from Domaine Ponsot was singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep, pure and nascently complex, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, meaty tones, a lovely base of soil tones and a nice touch of upper register spice. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite suave already on the attack, with excellent plushness at the core, fine soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and very classy finish. A very strong wine. 20127-2075+. **94.**

2017 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Ponsot

The 2017 Chapelle-Chambertin from Domaine Ponsot is also an outstanding wine. The aromatic constellation delivers a refined and sappy blend of black cherries, black plums, raw cocoa, a complex base of dark soil tones, grilled meats and a fine topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, precise and sappy at the core, with ripe, seamless tannins, excellent focus and balance and a very long, soil-driven and elegant finish. This is stellar Chapelle from the les Gêmeaux section of the vineyard. 2027-2075+. **94+.**

2017 Clos de la Roche “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Ponsot

The domaine’s 2017 Clos de la Roche “Vieilles Vignes” is destined to be an absolute classic vintage of this fine cuvée. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a nicely black fruity blend of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, dark soil tones, gentle floral elements and a quite smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in profile for a 2017, with a rock solid core, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very precise and very promising finish. 2027-2085. **95+.**

Domaine Taupenot-Merme (Morey St. Denis)

Romain Taupenot has made an excellent range of 2017s. He started harvesting on September 6th in this year and brought in wines with admirable mid-palate depth and fine structural chassis for mid to long-term cellaring. As is customary chez Taupenot in November, the wines had already been racked into tanks for the winter months and preparation for spring bottling. This had been done three weeks prior to my visit on November 7th and almost all of the wines had nicely bounced back and were showing very well indeed. The couple of outliers that were still a bit agitated from their recent racking I have scored within a range to be fair to them, but would fully expect them to eventually place at the upper limit. I did not taste any of the white wines here in 2017.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is a very good example, offering up a fine and black fruity nose of cassis, black cherries, bitter chocolate and quite a good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is fullish, well-balanced and nicely plump at the core, with a touch of backend tannin and good focus and grip on the long finish. 2018-2030+. **88.**

2017 Saint Romain Rouge- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Saint Romain *rouge* is also quite black fruity in personality this year, with the nose wafting from the glass in a nicely sappy blend of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, espresso and a fine base of chalky soil elements. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and

plush in the mid-palate, with very good soil signature, modest tannins and a long, vibrant and already quite tasty finish. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Auxey-Duresses *villages* from Romaine Taupenot has a lovely mix of red and black fruit on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, woodsmoke, a good base of soil tones and a bit of upper register espresso. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured out of the blocks, with a good core of fruit, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. A fine *villages*. 2021-2045+. **89+.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses “Premier Cru”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Premier Cru bottling from Auxey-Duresses is all sappy black fruit this year from Monsieur Taupenot, but is really lovely and will be an excellent value. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, French roast, a touch of bonfire and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely transparent, with a sappy core, suave tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and very stylish finish. I love good Auxey and this is clearly a top example of the vintage! 2022-2045+. **91.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Chambolle AC was one of the wines that was still a tad grumpy in the Taupenot cellars at the time of my visit. It is still quite closed after its recent racking, but with some prodding offers up scents of red and black cherries, chalky soil tones, gamebird, coffee, woodsmoke and a touch of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with what seems like some pretty sappiness buried deep down in the core. The tannins are fine-grained and fairly moderate and the wine is nicely focused and balanced, and though a bit grumpy to be tasted today, I am sure it will be very good indeed. 2022-2050. **89-90+.**

2017 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Domaine Taupenot Morey AC was also a bit reserved on the nose, but had bounced back perfectly already on the palate and was showing fine potential. The bouquet is a youthful blend of dark berries, black plums, a touch of sweet stems, dark soil tones, venison and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and very well-balanced, with a good core of black fruit, fine soil signature, suave tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. Good juice. 2022-2050. **90.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Gevrey *villages* was Romain Taupenot’s most on form AC bottling and it was really singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet is elegant and very pure, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, roses, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and a nice touch of gamebird. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and impressively soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, moderate tannins and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is a very, very good *villages*. 2021-2050. **90+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “la Combe d’Orveau”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Combe d’Orveau from Domaine Taupenot is a superb wine on both the nose and palate and was really singing at the time of my visit. The sappy bouquet delivers a beautiful constellation of black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a fine base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully soil-

driven, with a great core of pure fruit, impeccable balance and a very long, complex and suavely tannic finish of outstanding backend energy and grip. High class juice. 2024-2065. **92+**.

2017 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 la Riotte *chez* Taupenot is also outstanding and a quintessential example of this lovely *terroir*, offering up a fine bouquet of sappy black cherries and sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and again, a lovely topnote redolent of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex and tangy finish. 2023-2065. **92+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air” from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is another fine premier cru in the making. The nose is pure, complex and black fruity, offering up scents of black cherries, grilled meats, espresso, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of mustard seed and a deft framing of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows off an excellent core, with very good minerality, ripe tannins and a long, composed and very well balanced finish. Good juice in the making here. 2024-2060. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

Of all of Romaine Taupenot’s 2017 premier crus, the Pruliers was the most closed at the time of my visit, but given the style of this *terroir*, perhaps that is exactly how it should have been. With some coaxing the nose delivers a promising blend of dark berries, cassis, nutskin, venison, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a bit of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a rock solid core, ripe tannins and a very, very long, focused finish that shows off excellent backend lift and salinity in its still quite youthful finish. This will need some time to blossom, but it is after all, Pruliers! 2027-2065. **92-93**.

2017 Corton “Rognet”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Rognet here was more open and settled in after its *assemblage* and was showing excellent potential. The nose is a fine and youthful blend of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, roasted game, stony soil tones, woodsmoke, coriander seed and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This will be first class Corton in the fullness of time. 2027-2075. **93+**.

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Charmes-Chambertin from Romain Taupenot is another excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is deep, refined and nicely sappy, delivering a blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a nice framing of cedary oak and a gently exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely sappy, with excellent backend mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is very, very good Charmes! 2026-2075. **94**.

2017 Mazoyères-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Mazoyères-Chambertin from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is also excellent young wine. The aromatic constellation wafts from the glass in a refined blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones espresso, venison, a nice touch of spice, a refined framing of vanillin oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already quite complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2027-2075. **94**.

2017 Clos des Lambrays- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2017 Clos des Lambrays from the Taupenot family is already showing superb complexity on both the nose and palate. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of cassis, sweet dark berries, bonfire, espresso, a very complex base of soil, mustard seed and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite refined, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and very classy finish. Superb potential! 2027-2075. **95.**



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

Domaine Cécile Tremblay (Morey St. Denis)

Cécile Tremblay has crafted absolutely stunning wines in 2017 and this is one cellar where every ounce of potential inherent in the vintage has been realized in the lineup of wines. Cécile and her team began harvesting on September 5th in this vintage and reported her malolactic fermentations were quite normal in timing in 2017, so that the wines were showing quite beautifully at the time of my mid-November visit. The Bourgogne rouge and Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard” had just been racked ahead of my arrival at the domaine, and the Chambolle-Musigny “Feusselottes” was being racked upstairs as we tasted in the cellars, but Madame Tremblay had rescued a sample for us to taste prior to the start of that morning’s racking. The domaine will be one of the first to use the new appellation of Bourgogne Côte d’Or for their bottling, as Cécile Tremblay’s husband, Philippe Charlopin, was the gentleman who

came up with the idea of a new AOC to distinguish Bourgogne grown here from those produced further south in the Beaujolais, Mâconnais or Côte Chalonnaise. We did not try the 2017 Morey St. Denis “Très Girard”, and I did not write down in my notes the reason for this, but I assume it had just been racked the day prior to our visit. I had the pleasure to taste at the domaine this year with a few friends who were also tasting in the region, and one gentleman has been drinking Burgundy together with me for decades, but it was his first visit to taste in the domaine’s cellars. After about the third wine, he sidled over to me and whispered “these are about as close to Henri Mayer’s wines as I have ever tasted!” As he and I have had the pleasure to share quite a few bottles of Monsieur Mayer’s wines together over the long flow of years, I could only nod my head in absolute agreement with him- especially in the 2017 vintage, as Cécile Tremblay has made some of the most brilliant wines of the vintage this year!

2017 Bourgogne Côte d’Or “la Croix Blanche” Rouge- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Bourgogne Côte d’Or was showing very well at the time of our visit and was not out of sorts at all from its recent racking. The bouquet is deep and nicely black fruity, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a touch of meatiness, a fine base of soil and just a touch of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with a good core of fruit, just a touch of backend tannin and impressive focus and grip on the long finish. A very high class example of its level. 2020-2035+. **88+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cabottes”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

It was nice to see the fine Chambolle AC back in the domaine’s lineup this year after the severe frost damage to it last year. The 2017 is a beautiful young wine that shows excellent depth on both the nose and palate and was clearly limited in its potential vigor by Madame Tremblay. The wine offers up a lovely, sappy bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke and smoky oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, sappy and very refined in personality, with good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and perfectly balanced finish. Lovely juice. 2024-2055+. **91**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Vosne V.V. shares the same beautiful fruit tones with the Chambolle AC in this vintage, but is perhaps even a hair more transparent in its expression of its underlying *terroir*. The nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of raspberries, red and black plums, cocoa powder, duck, lovely soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven, with a sappy core, excellent focus and grip, suave tannins, vibrant acids and a very long, elegant and precise finish. This is a gorgeous village wine in the making! 2022-2055. **91+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Feusselottes *chez* Tremblay is a stunning wine in the making. Cécile retained fifty percent whole clusters this year for this bottling and the wine was absolutely singing in mid-November, soaring from the glass in a beautiful and quite red fruity nose of strawberries, raspberries, red plums, a nice sweet touch of the stems, complex soil tones, woodsmoke, raw cocoa and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine mineral drive, excellent focus and grip, suave tannins and a very long, very pure and dancing finish. Great juice. 2027-2065+. **93+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Beaumonts from Cécile Tremblay is also outstanding, showing off the inherent elegance of the vintage on both its nose and palate. The bouquet is a refined blend of plums, red

and black cherries, dark soil tones, Vosne spices, a touch of sweet stems again, fresh nutmeg and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, soil-driven and very complex, with a superb core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the poised and very, very promising finish. 2027-2065+. **94.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Rouges Dessus”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Rouges Dessus” from Domaine Tremblay is also outstanding and every bit as elegant out of the blocks as either the Feusselottes or Beaumonts. The nose delivers a fine constellation of red plums, red and black cherries, dark soil tones, gamebird, smoke, raw cocoa and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and absolutely rock solid at the core, with excellent transparency, ripe, seamless tannins, excellent focus and grip and fine lift on the very long and soil-driven finish. Another stellar premier cru. 2027-2065. **94.**

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

Cécile Tremblay’s 2017 Echézeaux is an utterly brilliant wine in the making and one of the best of the entire vintage! The stunning nose soars from the glass in a blaze of plums, red and black raspberries, duck, bonfire, raw cocoa, a complex base of minerality, fresh nutmeg, a sweet touch of the stems and a refined coating of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and beautifully balanced, with great focus and grip, enormous complexity, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, vibrant and soil-driven finish. Great, great Echézeaux! 2028-2085. **97.**

2017 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2017 Chapelle-Chambertin from Madame Tremblay is also a stunning wine, but it is a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the flamboyant and supremely elegant Echézeaux and will need a few more years to blossom. The youthful nose is pure and sappy, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, violets, gamebird, a hint of hazelnut, woodsmoke, a wisp of orange zest and a lovely base of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with a beautiful structural chassis, lovely soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and stunning length and grip on the perfectly balanced and youthful finish. All this great wine needs is time in the cellar to fully blossom. 2030-2085. **97.**

Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod (Chambolle-Musigny)

Ghislaine Barthod and her family started picking on September 2nd in 2017, not wishing to lose any of the beautiful freshness of the vintage after the heat spike in late August. The timing of the malos was quite normal with the 2017s, finishing up in the spring of 2018 and the entire cellar was racked in July of 2018, just ahead of vacation. After the severe frost damage here in 2016, the family had to move in and restrain yields a bit in 2017, so that the crop level ended up quite normal this year (rather than overly generous), with for instance, the Chambolle AC parcels coming in at forty-five hectoliters per hectare. Consequently, the 2017s chez Barthod have excellent mid-palate density, and suave, but still quite substantial structural elements. Across the board, the 2017s here are very, very transparent wines and beautifully reflect their underlying terroirs, so there is no chance of mistaking the Gruenchers from the Baudes this year! The two premier crus that were not produced in 2016, Combottes and Châtelots, are back in the roster again in 2017, and there are also two other new premier cru additions in Ghislaine Barthod’s cellars as well this year- the vineyards of Sentiers and Noirots. There are one and a

half barrels of Sentiers and three and a half of Noirots in 2017, making the most complete roster of Chambolle premier crus in the entire village all that more complete with their addition.

2017 Bourgogne “Bons Batons”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 Domaine Barthod Bourgogne rouge is going to be a fine example, as the wine delivers lovely aromatics of red berries, cherries, lovely soil tones and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely structured, with a bit of backend tannin, a good core and a long, tangy finish. Good juice. 2022-2037. **88.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 Chambolle *villages* is beautifully perfumed and mineral this year, with the nose offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, roses, chalky soil tones, gamebird and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very nicely balanced, with a good core, fine mineral drive and lovely, seamless tannins perking up the long and focused finish. Good juice. 2024-2055. **90.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Combottes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

After producing no Combottes in 2016, due to frost damage, it was nice to see this premier cru back in its regular position in the tasting lineup in 2017. The wine is bright, floral and beautifully transparent on both the nose and palate this year, offering up a fine bouquet of red plums, cherries, violets, cocoa powder, chalky soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite suave already on the attack, with a good, sappy core, fine focus and grip and a long, moderately tannic and soil-driven finish. Fine juice. 2025-2065. **91+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Châtelots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The Châtelots was the other premier cru in 2016 that was so badly frosted that the scant number of bunches here at harvest time went into the *villages* cuvée. The 2017 seems to have bounced back with gusto, as this is a really, really good bottle this year. The nose wafts from the glass in a lovey, red fruity blend of cherries, blood orange, red plums, raw cocoa, a lovely base of soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and sappy at the core, with a full-bodied format, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Classic Chambolle in the making! 2025-2065. **92.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Sentiers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Domaine Barthod’s new bottling of les Sentiers is a lovely wine, with this parcel of vines fully eighty-five years of age. The wine is quite lovely on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, a touch of beetroot, mustard seed, lovely soil tones, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and nicely transparent, with lovely focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and complex finish. A lovely new addition! 2026-2065. **92.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Gruenchers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The Barthod family’s 2017 Gruenchers is absolutely classic in all respects, wafting from the glass in a vibrant aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, roses, chalky soil tones, gamebird, pomegranate and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven, with a sappy core of red fruit, bright acids and fine purity and grip on the long and ripely tannic finish. Fine, fine juice. 2025-2065. **92+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Les Baudes lies just below Bonnes-Mares on the slope and its proximity can be very much felt this year, as the wine has just a touch of black fruitiness in its profile this year, to go

along with the copious red fruit of the vintage in Chambolle. The beautiful bouquet delivers a lovely blend of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, complex soil tones *pigeons*, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very nicely structured, with sappy core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and vibrant finish. This will need a fully decade in the cellar to properly blossom, but will be superb, once it unfurls. 2027-2065. **92+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Noirots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The les Noirots used to go into the Chambolle AC blend, but Ghislaine’s son prevailed upon her to bottle it on its own and these sixty-five year-old vines now produce another of the fine premier crus in the domaine’s lineup. The wine is excellent on both the nose and palate, with the quite complex bouquet delivering a fine blend of strawberries, red plums, cherries, cocoa, lavender, complex soil tones, gamebird and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with impressive soil signature, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, balanced and very classy finish. Excellent juice! 2025-2065+.

93.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 Chambolle “Charmes” from Madame Barthod is truly a beautiful wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, refined and sappy, wafting from the glass in a vibrant mix of plums, cherries, violets, chalky soil tones, peonies, raw cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with lovely focus and grip, suave tannins and a very long, primary and sappy finish. This is a beautiful bottle in the making, but I would try to leave it alone for a full decade and let it completely blossom before starting to have at it in earnest, for underneath the beautifully sappy fruit is a wine with a very good structural chassis. 2027-2065+. **93+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” - Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 les Fuées from Domaine Barthod is a stunning young wine. The nose delivers a sappy and refined constellation of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a touch of mustard seed, a complex base of limestone soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and stunningly transparent, with a sappy core, superb focus and grip, fine-grained tannins, outstanding mineral drive and a very, very long, nascently complex finish. Great juice. 2027-2065+. **94+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Veroilles”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 les Veroilles is an excellent bottle in the making, with the bouquet quite a bit more expressive today than the nicely structured palate. The nose is sappy and flat out gorgeous, wafting from the glass in a mix of pomegranate, cherries, woodsmoke, peonies, a fine base of soil, raw cocoa, a hint of citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, pure and nicely soil-driven, with a very good core, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex finish. This is an excellent bottle in the making, but it does not quite possess the same vibrancy and precision of the Charmes or Fuées and suffers just a touch having to follow those two beautiful wines. 2026-2065. **92+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 les Cras from Ghislaine Barthod is another absolutely stunning young wine in her cellars. The bouquet is pure, sappy and very complex out of the blocks, delivering a beautiful combination of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, red plum, gamebird, a nice touch of mustard seed, roses, vanillin oak and a stunningly pure expression of soil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with marvelous transparency, ripe, suave tannins

and impeccable focus and balance on the very, very long and complex finish. This is an absolutely complete example of Chambolle! 2027-2065+. **94+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Beaux Bruns”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2017 Beaux Bruns was the only wine in the cellar that was not singing at the time of my mid-November visit to Domaine Barthod, as the wine was just a touch reductive and needed a bit of coaxing to express itself. With some swirling the wine offers up a promising bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, *pigeon* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and focused, with a rock solid core, lovely balance and grip, ripe tannins and a long, youthful and promising finish. Good juice. 2027-2065. **92+**.



The vineyard of Feusselottes, just on the other side of the fence from Domaines Barthod and Boillot.

Domaine Louis Boillot (Chambolle-Musigny)

Louis Boillot has made outstanding 2017s, coupling the sappy depth of the best wines of the vintage with the purity, transparency and silky elegance of the vintage. Monsieur Boillot has been on quite a tear of late and the last five or six vintages have been the finest of his career- at least to my palate. Louis and his wife, Ghislaine Barthod, have been joined full-time now at their domaines by their son, Clément Boillot-Barthod, and the wines from both domaines seem to have benefited from another pair of hands available in both the vineyards and cellars. The harvest here got started just a few days ahead of Ghislaine Barthod's parcels, as Louis and his son were out in the vineyard of les Angles in Volnay on August 28th to bring in the grapes there. The rest

progressed from September 2nd onwards under ideal conditions. The wines had been racked in mid-summer of 2018 and almost all were on their best behavior in mid-November, showing beautifully on both the nose and palate (the Pruliers was a touch reductive and took a bit of coaxing). Though there are copious levels of pure and sappy fruit in all the Boillot 2017s, what really stands out is just how precise they are in their expressions of their respective terroirs and this is a strikingly transparent vintage chez Boillot, with each and every bottling shouting out its underlying terroir. They are all properly structured, and though there is a glaze of accessibility in some of the wines, due to the simply gorgeous fruit elements, these are wines that are built nicely for the cellar and will last long and evolve beautifully in bottle. There will be absolutely no rush to drink them young and they will certainly rank up there with the best wines of the vintage in 2017.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Louis Boillot

The Domaine Boillot Bourgogne is a lovely bottle in 2017, as it offers up a bright and classy nose of red and black cherries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of violets in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already nicely suave on the attack, with a good core of sappy fruit and a nice touch of silky tannin adding grip on the long finish. Good juice. 2020-2035. **88.**

2017 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Côte de Nuits Villages from Domaine Louis Boillot is really excellent this year and will be a terrific value. The refined nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, gamebird, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and a nice touch of upper register spice. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very elegant and focused, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature and a modest bite of tannins on the long and complex finish. Clearly the village of Brochon has really excelled in 2017. 2018-2040. **90.**

2017 Fixin- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 vintage's inherent elegance is quite apparent in this lovely, young bottle of Fixin. The bouquet delivers scents of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, black minerality and a touch of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe and gently chewy tannins and a long, nascently complex and quite classy finish. Young Fixin is not usually this polished and this augurs very well for the wine's development. Another excellent value! 2021-2040+. **90.**

2017 Beaune "Epenottes"- Domaine Louis Boillot

Monsieur Boillot's 2017 Beaune "Epenottes" is another excellent wine on both the nose and palate. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a pure blend of black cherries, cassis, gamebird, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and a nice touch of upper register fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and long, with a sappy core, fine backend mineral drive, suave tannins and a long, tangy and energetic finish. Lovely juice. 2024-2055. **90+.**

2017 Pommard- Domaine Louis Boillot

As is the case with the Fixin, the vintage's elegance has given the young 2017 Pommard *chez* Boillot a lovely sheen of refinement right out of the blocks. The nose offers up scents of cherries, red plums, a touch of quince, raw cocoa, a great base of soil and a topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and soil-driven, with lovely mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex finish. This is a very classy village wine in the making. 2026-2055. **90+.**

2017 Volnay “les Grands Poisots”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 les Grands Poisots from Monsieur Boillot is another excellent *villages*, with the nose delivering a fine constellation of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a lovely topnote of spice elements. On the palate the wine is pure, long, and rock solid at the core, with ripe, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, nascently complex finish. 2026-2055. **90+**.

2017 Volnay “les Angles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The Boillot family hustled to bring in their parcel of les Angles early this year and brought in grapes with potential alcohol of thirteen percent on August 28th, which shows just how quickly the sugars were soaring after the heat spike in the third week of August! The wine has turned out beautifully, delivering a lovely nose of plums, cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a bit of bonfire, a superb base of soil and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and nicely structured, with ripe tannins, a superb core of fruit and a long, soil-driven finish. Lovely Volnay. 2027-2065+. **91+**.

2017 Volnay “les Brouillards”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Boillot les Brouillards is truly exceptional this year, sharing a great sappiness in its fruit component and great *typicité*. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a very pure blend of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, mustard seed and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite minerally in profile, despite an absolutely beautiful sappy core. The finish is long, ripely tannic and impeccably balanced, with tangy acids and outstanding focus and complexity. This is dynamite young wine. 2027-2065+. **93**.

2017 Volnay “les Caillerets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Caillerets is every bit as refined and perhaps even a hair more complex than the Brouillards this year. The nose is deep, pure and an utterly classical expression of this unique *terroir*, offering up scents of cherries, currants, red plums, lovely spice tones, venison, a touch of nutskin, stony soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very transparent, with a super core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very precise and classy finish. 2028-2070. **93+**.

2017 Pommard “les Fremiers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The vintage's elegance is once again front and center on the 2017 Fremiers from Domaine Boillot. The nose is pure and classy, delivering scents of cherries, quince, a touch of blood orange, a great base of soil, mustard seed, cedar and a floral topnote redolent of rose petals. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, elegant and sports outstanding mid-palate depth, with ripe tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, transparent and very promising finish. 2028-2065+. **92**.

2017 Pommard “les Croix Noires”- Domaine Louis Boillot

Readers know how much I love this cuvée from Monsieur Boillot and the 2017 version has done nothing to temper my enthusiasm, as this is a great wine in the making! The bouquet is pure, precise and already beautifully complex, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, strawberries, blood orange, perfumed spice tones, a very complex base of soil, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with great transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, perfectly balanced and vibrant finish. Is this Pommard's most elegant premier cru? 2028-2075. **94**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Louis Boillot

Ninety percent of this bottling hails from the *villages* section of Beaux Bruns. The wine is lovely in 2017, offering up a pure and sappy nose of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, mustard seed and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and nicely backward out of the blocks, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, just a touch of tannin and fine bounce and grip on the tangy finish. Another really strong village wine *chez* Boillot in 2017. 2023-2055. **91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Gevrey *villages* is every bit as good as the Chambolle from Monsieur Boillot this year. The bouquet delivers a fine aromatic constellation of black cherries, dark berries, black minerality, raw cocoa, grilled meats and a topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely mineral in personality, with a good core of sappy black fruit, suave tannins and impressive length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2023-2055. **91.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 les Evocelles from Domaine Boillot is already a very complex wine aromatically, as the nose offers up a lovely blend of red and black cherries, red plums, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, gamebird, mustard seed and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very soil-driven this year, with a sappy core, fine-grained tannins and a long, elegant and still quite youthful finish. 2026-2060+. **92.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Champonnets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

Like so many of these wines in the Boillot cellars this year, the 2017 Champonnets is already beautifully expressive aromatically and offers up a perfumed constellation of red plums, *fraises du bois*, cherries, roses, a great base of soil, mustard seed, cedar and an exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and very refined, with a sappy core, great soil signature, suave tannins and a long, poised and beautifully focused finish. Great juice. 2026-3065+. **93.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cherbaudes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Cherbaudes from Monsieur Boillot is outstanding, as these very old vines have produced an absolute classic in this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a sappy and vibrant mix of red plums, cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, mustard seed, a complex and gorgeous base of soil, cedar and a touch of hazelnut in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and soil-driven, with a great core of fruit, ripe, suave tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and haunting finish. 2028-2075. **94.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2017 Pruliers was the only wine in the domaine’s cellars this year that was a little grumpy being tasted in mid-November, as it was just a touch reduced. But, with a bit of swirling it opened up nicely to reveal a nose of dark berries, black cherries, venison, a touch of new leather, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite primary in personality, with a rock solid core of pure fruit, firm, seamless tannins and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced and still very youthful finish. This is a proper *vin de garde* and will demand time in the cellar to blossom, but will be outstanding once it is ready to drink. 2028-2075. **94.**



Autumn colors festooning the front of the Château de Chambolle-Musigny.

Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier's 2017s had recently been racked prior to my visit in mid-November, with all the wines from Chambolle-Musigny having been racked the last week of October and the Clos de la Maréchale having been racked only the week before I stopped by to taste. Despite the recent rackings, the wines were actually showing very well indeed and seemed to be in good form for sampling. The harvest here began on September 9th in 2017, and clearly Monsieur Mugnier and his team were vigorous in the vineyards during the course of the growing season in keeping a close rein on potential yields, as these 2017s were deep, pure and beautifully concentrated in style. Not all of the wines were showing the overtly sappy side of the vintage at the time of my visit, but I have to assume that it is present in all of the wines here (based on examples such as the les Fuées where it was very much front and center) and its lack of prominence in a couple of wines was simply a reflection of the recent racking. These are some of the best red wines to be found in the Côte d'Or this year, as they combine all of the beautiful purity and generosity of fruit of the vintage, with superb transparency and really quite present and sophisticated structural elements. They will likely be accessible from a fairly early age, but they are not going to be wines that are early drinkers that need consuming in the first couple of decades, as they are so beautifully balanced that I expect they will age for many, many decades. By the way, the 2017 Musigny from Monsieur Mugnier may very well be the wine of the vintage, but clients will have to be patient, as it will not be released for many years to come. Just tuck

away in the back of your mind the thought that the wine is utterly stunning and when that day comes down the road, take what you are offered, as it is a brilliant, brilliant young Musigny!

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Monsieur Mugnier's Chambolle *villages* bottlings is one of my favorite village wines in the Côte de Nuits and the 2017 is going to be a lovely example of the vintage. The wine is still a tad reserved aromatically from its recent racking, but with a bit of coaxing offers up a lovely red fruity blend of strawberries, cherries, a fine base of minerality, roses, mustard seed and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is juicy, full-bodied and nicely transparent, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, tangy and modestly tannic finish. Fine juice in the making. 2022-2050. **90.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2017 les Fuées *chez* Mugnier is a superb wine, as it offers up a pure and sappy bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and tangy, with a superb core, excellent soil signature, suave tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very long, perfectly balanced and refined finish. This will not need too many years in the cellar to start to drink beautifully, but with such superb balance, it will have no difficulties aging long and gracefully as well. 2025-2065. **92+.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Despite having only been racked the week before my visit, the 2017 Clos de la Maréchale was showing superb potential and this is clearly a great vintage for this bottling. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a perfumed and very refined blend of cherries, red berries, a touch of plum, raw cocoa, lovely minerality, mustard seed and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and vibrant, with a sappy core of fruit, great transparency, fine-grained tannins and excellent grip and focus on the long and tangy finish. Superb juice. 2026-2065. **92+.**

2017 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2017 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine Mugnier was another wine that was absolutely singing at the time of my visit and showed plenty of sappy depth in the mid-palate. The nose is pure, expressive and very classy, offering up scents of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of chalky soil tones and a nice base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and elegantly structured, with a beautiful sappy core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, tangy, complex and energetic finish. A stellar example of Bonnes-Mares. 2027-2075+. **94+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2017 Amoureuses *chez* Mugnier is another brilliant wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, refined and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, plums, pomegranate, *pigeon*, beautiful, chalky minerality, rose petals and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and gorgeously transparent, with a sappy core of red fruit, stunning elegance and refinement to its structural chassis, fine-grained tannins and laser-like focus on the very, very long, complex and utterly delicious finish. This is going to be simply irresistible when it is ready to drink! 2027-2075. **95.**

2017 Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2017 Domaine Mugnier Musigny is breathtakingly beautiful wine and one of the greatest examples of the vintage that I had the pleasure to taste during my three weeks in the

region in November. The bouquet is simply brilliant, delivering a magical constellation of red plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, fresh nutmeg, a very complex base of limestone soil elements, pomegranate, a hint of fresh thyme, vanillin oak and an exotic spicy topnote of cardamom. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with great synthesis of fruit and complex minerality, ripe, refined and seamless tannins and great length and grip on the vibrant, youthful and utterly profound finish. Pure magic. 2033-2100. **98.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale” Blanc- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2017 Clos de la Maréchale Blanc is another lovely example of the vintage. The wine had been assembled into tank for bottling early in the new year and was showing marvelously well in mid-November, wafting from the glass in a blend of quince, apple, salty minerality, a nice touch of fresh almond, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy in profile, with a lovely core, fine focus and grip and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. Classy juice. 2018-2035+. **92.**

Domaine Georges Roumier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Christophe Roumier has made superb 2017s. He began harvesting on September 8th in this vintage and had relatively late malos by the standards of 2017, as they did not finish up until the end of July of 2018. The entire cellar had been racked three weeks prior to my visit, but most of the wines had bounced back nicely and were showing very well indeed in mid-November. The fruit components across the board with these 2017s show a beautiful synthesis of sappiness and stunning purity, which will make them very charming wines their entire lives. Additionally, each wine is beautifully reflective of its underlying terroir and each wine is impeccably balanced, with plenty of suave tannin to carry them for many, many decades in bottle. All of the bottlings from the Domaine Roumier parcels were absolutely brilliant and amongst the very best examples of their respective appellations that I tasted during my three weeks in Burgundy. This included the long-running bottlings of both Charmes and Ruchottes-Chambertin that Christophe farms for other owners, but where he is in charge of all the viticultural work during the growing season. The one slight outlier in the Roumier lineup in 2017 was his new bottling of Echézeaux, which is made under a metayage agreement, and which was very heavily-frosted in 2016. Consequently, the 2017 version seemed to lack just a bit of mid-palate stuffing vis à vis the other wines in the cellar and it is not hard to imagine that the parcel's owner, after being nearly wiped out by frost in 2016, was loathe to cut back yields too severely in the subsequent vintage. But, overall, this is a brilliant range of 2017s and Christophe Roumier has certainly seized the opportunity presented by the growing season and crafted one of the finest lineups of wines to be found in this excellent vintage.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2017 Chambolle AC from Christophe Roumier is absolutely superb, offering up great purity on both the nose and palate. The sappy bouquet delivers a marvelous mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, complex soil tones, gamebird and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, nascently complex and nicely sappy at the core, with lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, vibrant and focused finish. This is very high class villages. 2022-2055. **91.**

2017 Morey St. Denis “Clos de la Bussière”- Domaine Georges Roumier

The inherent elegance of the best 2017s is very much in evidence in the young Clos de la Bussière from this vintage. The black fruity bouquet delivers a lovely constellation of black

cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil and a bit of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full, long and sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, suave tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This will need a full decade to really hit its apogee, but it is going to be one of the best Clos de la Bussière vintages in the last twenty years. 2027-2065. **92.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Combottes”- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2017 les Combottes *chez* Roumier has turned out beautifully as well, with a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks that augurs very well for its future evolution in bottle. The nose is a fine blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, chalky soil tones, raw cocoa, smoke, vanillin oak and a nice touch of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and very well-balanced, with a good solid core, fine-grained tannins and fine grip on the long and classy finish. This is very good as well in 2017, but it does not quite have the bounce of the Bussière this year. 2025-2065. **91+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2017 les Cras from Christophe Roumier was still a bit hunkered down after its racking three weeks previously and was not as on form as most of the other wines in the cellar. Nevertheless, with a bit of coaxing, the wine starts to show some nuance on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering a blend of red and black cherries, a touch of savory spice elements from the whole clusters, bitter chocolate, a great base of chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and gamebird. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, close and absolutely rock solid at the core, with fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, very youthful finish. I am sure this is going to be excellent, but it was still so shut down at the time of my visit that I have scored the wine in a range. 2027-2075. **91-93.**

2017 Echézeaux- Christophe Roumier

The 2017 Echézeaux from Christophe Roumier is effectively his first bottling of this wine, as the severe frost damage in this parcel only allowed him to produce a half barrel of the wine in 2016. But, as this wine is made from contracted fruit, Christophe did not have the same control over the yields in 2017 as was the case with his own domaine parcels, and there seemed to be just a touch of *fluidité* to this wine in comparison to the other 2017s in the cellar this year. The nose is certainly lovely, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of sappy cherries and red plums, dark soil tones, a nice touch of fresh herbs, woodsmoke and *pigeon*. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and properly reserved in personality, with respectable depth, ripe, well-integrated tannins and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. It is possible that there is more mid-palate stuffing here than was currently on display, as the wine was only racked three weeks ahead of my visit. If that turns out to be the case, then my score will end up being a tad conservative. 2025-2065. **91+.**

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

Christophe's 2017 Charmes-Chambertin is beautifully red fruity and sappy this year, delivering a perfumed constellation of strawberries, cherries, a touch of blood orange, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil, a touch of mustard seed and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, full-bodied and classy in personality, with impressive nascent complexity, lovely sappiness at the core, fine transparency and a very long, ripely tannic and beautifully balanced finish. Just a beautiful example of Charmes. 2027-2075+. **93.**

2017 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

The 2017 Ruchottes-Chambertin from Christophe Roumier is an exceptional wine in the making and absolutely classic in all respects. The bouquet is pure, focused and complex, wafting

from the glass in a blend of red plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a complex base of minerality, raw cocoa, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and loaded with sappy purity at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and a very long, focused and tangy finish. This is like a hypothetical blend of the 1991 and 2005 Ruchottes *chez* Roumier. 2027-2075. **94+**.

2017 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Georges Roumier

As I noted last year, with the addition of an additional half *hectare* of vines in Bonnes-Mares through a *mettayage* agreement, the balance of this cuvée has been shifted towards *terres blanches* and the wine seems to have a bit more chalk-derived raciness to its personality in the last two years. The 2017 Bonnes-Mares is going to be absolutely brilliant, as the wine offers up a deep, refined and properly reserved aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a very complex base of minerality, gamebird, woodsmoke and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a beautiful stylistic combination of sappiness and great transparency, ripe, buried tannins and stunning length and grip on the poised, perfectly balanced and oh, so promising finish. This is a brilliant and very elegant, young Bonnes-Mares. 2032-2100. **97**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2017 les Amoureuses from Domaine Roumier is also a stunning bottle in the making. The refined and perfumed bouquet delivers a blend of sappy red and black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, chalky soil tones, gamebird, roses, raw cocoa, a touch of vanillin oak and violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with lovely intensity of flavor, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, complex and refined finish. This will be very ethereal in its beauty when it is fully ready to drink. 2030-2085. **96+**.

2017 Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

Happily, after the very, very short crop in Christophe’s small parcel of Musigny in 2016, the yields this year were up to their normal level and there is the customary barrel and a half of this wine in the cellars again in 2017. Christophe was able to use eighty percent whole clusters for his Musigny this year, and the wine was showing beautifully at the time of my visit. The bouquet offers up a refined blend of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, mustard seed, a touch of Asian spices, a gorgeous base of soil, peonies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and gorgeously soil-driven, with a sappy core, refined tannins and great length and grip on the seamless and perfectly balanced finish. A brilliant wine. 2033-2100. **98**.

2017 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2017 Corton-Charlemagne from Christophe Roumier had been bottled at the start of September and was still in the process of recovering from its early autumn *mise*. This is the third vintage that has been bottled under Diam. The wine was still a bit reserved on both the nose and palate after its relatively recent bottling, but eventually offers up scents of lemon, apple, a touch of quince, bee pollen, chalky minerality and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a good core, fine soil signature, bright acids and very good length and grip on the still quite primary finish. 2018-2040+. **91-92+**.

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

I could not have arrived at Domaine de Comte de Vogüé to taste the 2017s at a worse time, as the cellar was still in the midst of racking, with most of the wines already racked only having been done so in the last few days ahead of my visit. The wines were as cranky as one

would expect right after being racked and I have scored them in a range as a result. Cellar Master François Millet noted that the domaine practiced a green harvest in 2017 just before veraison, to help offset all that pent up energy in the vines from last year, as Chambolle-Musigny was one of the worst frosted villages in 2016. The harvest here got started early, on September 2nd. I did not think to ask Monsieur Millet about the pace of malos with the 2017s, but as everything was being racked in November, one has to assume that they were pretty much the normal spring completion as was the case at Domaine Dujac and others. After their racking, the wines were showing copious amounts of pure and sappy fruit across the board, but seemed rather meager in their underlying expressions of terroir and I had to assume that this was simply the stage that they were in at the time of my visit. If the cellar can start to show more terroir with further recovery time after the racking, then I would expect the wines to place at the upper number in the range I have given them, as it is hard to imagine that the vintage is really so fruit forward in style here as the wines showed in mid-November. The fruit tones are very pretty to be sure, and there is a beguiling sappiness in the wines, but one is accustomed to a lot more terroir in each wine than what was on display at the time of my visit. I have a very hard time not believing that this was simply a reflection of their stage after their very recent racking. That said, I spent a lot of time during the remainder of my trip thinking about how these wines showed vis à vis many of their neighbors, as there was a black fruity sappiness to many of the wines which seemed to recall a bit the 1990s here, and which I had a hard time reconciling with the early start to picking on the 2nd of September. To be sure, the 2017s are nowhere near as powerful as the 1990s showed here out of the blocks, but there is a similarity to their fruit tones at the time that I tasted them in November that was a bit perplexing.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The domaine's 2017 Chambolle AC was the first wine racked in the cellars this year, so it had already seen two weeks of recovery time when I dropped by to visit on the 12th of November and was consequently showing a bit better than some of its siblings. The nose is quite black fruity and sappy, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, dark chocolate, a good base of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with suave tannins and good length and grip on the primary finish. This is still not entirely on form, but less cranky than some wines in the cellar. 2024-2050. **89-90.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny "Premier Cru"- Domaine de Georges de Comte de Vogüé

The 2017 Premier Cru (or young vine Musigny, which is what it actually is) was showing very sappy and generously fruity at the time of my visit, but like the Chambolle AC, was not revealing all of its soil elements post-racking. The nose has a lot of really lovely fruit to offer, with notes of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, vanillin oak, violets and a gentle base of soil elements. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and nicely structured, with a good core, moderate, fine-grained tannins and a long, fruit-driven finish. I assume more soil signature will emerge here with more distance out from the racking. 2025-2055. **90-92.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny "les Amoureuses"- Domaine Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2017 les Amoureuses was showing far more of its mineral side than the preceding two wines, but it too was more about its beautifully sappy fruit tones than the great *terroir* of Amoureuses at the time of my visit. The bouquet is certainly complex and will be quite promising, if its customary signature of soil returns, as the fruit elements of sappy black cherries and plums, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, gentle spice tones and vanillin oak is now nicely

augmented by soil tones, but usually has even more *terroir* in its aromatic profile at this point in its evolution. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a lovely underlying chassis of structure, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and promising finish. This will be very good, but it could well be outstanding, but is hiding a bit right after its racking. 2027-2070. **92-94.**

2017 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The Bonnes-Mares parcel owned by the domaine was one of the most severely frosted in the vineyard in 2016, but with a green harvest, Monsieur Millet was able to keep the potential vigor of the vines nicely reined-in and this wine was showing very good potential at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep and black fruity, offering up scents of black cherries, blueberries, blackberries, a good base of soil, dark chocolate, gamebird, vanillin oak and a touch of savory spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with plenty of fruit at the core, good soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, well-balanced and primary finish. This was the most on form wine in the cellar on this day and showed lovely promise. 2028-2080. **93-94+.**

2017 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2017 Musigny old vine bottling was quite hunkered down after its recent racking, but though it was not as expressive as the Bonnes-Mares on this particular day, it showed good underlying soil signature and seemed to only be in need of more time out from the racking for everything to snap back into proper place. The wine certainly has lovely fruit elements in its mix of sappy black cherries and plums, complex soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and lovely length and grip on the refined and quite soil-driven finish. This wine is not as precise as is customary (and which has to be a reflection of the post-racking period in which I tasted it), but there are really good elements here and if they all fall back into place properly, it will be a lovely wine. 2030-2080+. **93-95.**

Vougeot and Gilly-lès-Cîteaux

Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat (Vougeot)

Charles van Canneyt has once again turned out a stellar lineup of wines in 2017 and has not missed the opportunity to make truly great wines this year. His was one of the few cellars where the malos were fairly late in 2017, which I assume was partly due to the fact that he kept his cellars cooler during the spring and summer. The last wine did not finish its malolactic fermentation here until the start of September of 2018, so one can see these were quite behind the normal pace of secondary fermentations in this vintage. Consequently, due to the later finishing malolactic fermentations, nothing in the cellar had been racked yet and everything was pretty much on form, with the exception of a few wines that were gently reduced and ready for their racking, which was due to commence the following week. There is a new wine in the cellar this year, a Meursault villages bottling from the climat of “le Clos d’École” that Charles had already bottled at the start of September. The grapes for this wine were picked on August 31st, with the picking team getting rolling in the red wine parcels from the domaine on the 7th of September. As is customary chez Hudelot, the 2017 Bourgogne rouge was also already in bottle at the time of my November visit, but all the other red wines remained in barrel. A few of the wines with later-finishing malos still had a touch of gas in them and I have scored those wines within a range to be fair to them, would fully expect them to eventually score at the top end of the range. This is a great, great vintage chez Hudelot!



Charles van Canneyt in front of the autumn foliage on a warm November afternoon in Vougeot.

2017 Meursault “le Clos d’École”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The Meursault “le Clos d’École” is a new bottling from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat, made from a parcel of fifty year-old vines and raised in twenty percent new oak in 2017. The wine had been bottled at the start of September of 2018 and was pretty nicely bounced back from the *mise* in early November, offering up a pretty nose of apple, quince, chalky soil tones, white flowers and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is medium-full, vibrant and crisp, with a good core, sound backend bounce and grip and a long, succulent finish. A good AC. 2018-2035+. **89-90.**

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Charles was still a bit shut down after its bottling, but with a bit of coaxing, shows a pretty nose of red and black cherries, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is medium-full, focused and nicely balanced, with a bit of backend tannin, a good core and fine length and grip. As this was just bottled, I have scored it in a range, as was the case with the Meursault. 2020-2035. **88-89.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Chambolle AC from Domaine Hudelot was showing very nicely out of barrel. The nose is pure and very enticing, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, a fine base of soil, gamebird and a floral topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and

nicely plush on the attack, with a good core, a dollop of backend tannin and a long, tangy and classy finish. Good juice. 2024-2060. **90.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Vosne-Romanée AC from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is also a fine example of its level, offering up impressive purity on the nose in its mix of black raspberries, black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird and a lovely base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is refined, focused and full-bodied, with a sappy core of fruit, impressive mineral drive, moderate tannins and a long, vibrant and really well-balanced finish. This is delicious juice in the making. 2023-2060. **90+.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Au Bas de Combe”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Charles van Canneyt noted that the 2017 Au Bas de Combe was one of the last wines to finish up its malo this year and the wine was a bit more reserved on both the nose and palate as a result. With some swirling in the glass, the wine delivers a fine bouquet of black plums, black cherries, *pigeon*, espresso, dark soil tones and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and balanced, with a fine core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, focused and currently quite reticent finish. I am sure this is going to be very good and I would expect it to be the pick of the litter of these three excellent *villages* wines when it is ready to drink. 2021-2060. **90-91.**

2017 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Petits Vougeots was also one of the last wines to finish up its malo, but had recovered completely on the nose and was really showing lovely aromatic precision. However, on the palate, there was still a touch of CO2 on the backend, so I have scored the wine within a range. The bouquet is utterly charming, wafting from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate, despite the bit of remaining gas from the malo, the wine is full-bodied, pure and very long, with tangy acids, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and very promising finish. This should ultimately place at the upper limit of the range. 2024-2065+. **91-92+.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Murgers”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Happily, the 2017 Murgers *chez* Hudelot was completely on form and showing stunning potential at the time of my visit. The inherent elegance of the vintage is very much in evidence here, as the bouquet delivers a beautiful blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, espresso, venison, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, deep and sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the poised and perfectly balanced finish. 2027-2075. **93.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Like the Petits Vougeots, the 2017 Chambolle “Charmes” still had a touch of gas remaining on the palate from its later malo. The bouquet is pure and very refined, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, cocoa powder, violets, chalky soil tones and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent transparency, tangy acids and very good focus and grip on the long and promising finish. I am sure this will be lovely. 2025-2065. **92-93.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts” from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat was showing beautifully at the time of my visit and is going to be an exceptional wine. The bouquet is pure and very beautiful in its blend of black raspberries, sweet blackberries, woodsmoke, espresso, dark soil tones, *pigeon* and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex

and very well-balanced, with fine focus and grip, lovely mineral drive and a long, refined and ripely tannic finish. Just a beautiful bottle in the making. 2027-2065. **93.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Suchots from Charles van Canneyt is an archetypical example of this fine *terroir*, offering up a deep and black fruity bouquet of cassis, dark berries, French Roast, gamebird, dark soil tones, a nice framing of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote redolent of bonfires. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit more primary than the Beaumonts, with a sappy core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and impressive length and grip on the very well balanced finish. Fine juice. **93.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Malconsorts *chez* Hudelot is absolutely stunning in its purity and precision on both the nose and palate. The perfumed bouquet soars from the glass in a blaze of red and black raspberries, cherries, musky floral tones, cocoa powder, duck, a complex base of minerality, rose petals and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with stunning transparency, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and a very, very long, vibrant and complex finish. This is stellar. 2026-2065. **94.**

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is a superb wine in the making. The bouquet is deep, sappy and properly reserved in personality, offering up a fine blend of plums, red and black cherries, gamebird, dark chocolate, a beautifully complex base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and deep at the core, with fine soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. Charles van Canneyt makes one of the very top examples of Clos Vougeot and his 2017 is going to be an outstanding bottle in the fullness of time. 2028-2085. **94+.**

2017 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Romanée-St.-Vivant from Monsieur van Canneyt is breathtakingly beautiful wine in the making. The bouquet is flat out stunning, soaring from the glass in a blaze of sappy black cherries, black raspberries, raw cocoa, a very complex base of minerality, duck, vanillin oak and an exotic touch of lavender in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, complex and full-bodied, with stunning depth at the sappy core, beautiful mineral drive and a long, tangy and fine-grained finish. This is light on its feet and yet loaded with sappy fruit and great minerality. A brilliant wine. 2030-2100. **98.**

2017 Richebourg- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2017 Richebourg from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is also a stunning wine, showing a beautifully elegant vintage veneer to its aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, chocolate, gamebird, a nice base of soil tones, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and quite soil-driven for a young Richebourg, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, vibrant and energetic finish. This too is just stellar. 2030-2100. **96+.**

Laurent Ponsot (Gilly-lès-Citeaux)

I was very pleased to get to see a wider range of wines from Laurent Ponsot and his new, négociant project in the 2017 vintage than had been possible in the spring, when I stopped by to taste his 2016s. Back in March, so many wines were either just bottled or in preparation for such that Laurent understandably wanted to only show wines that were at a good moment in their evolutions to taste and we worked through quite a limited range of what he is now producing

under his own label. Happily, in November, the wines were all singing and there was a much wider and representative lineup of bottlings to sample, though I am sure that I did not taste the full range of 2017s that Monsieur Ponsot will offer in this vintage. Laurent likes to give his wines Cuvée names and I did my best to get them all down, but missed the names on his Bâtard-Montrachet and Echézeaux bottlings. I am sure that they have one, but I will have to wait a year to find out what they are, as this newsletter is already late enough getting into your inbox, so I will not delay it to send an email for those cuvées. As I noted in my notes on my spring visit here, Laurent has been joined by his son Clément Ponsot on a full-time basis in the new négociant venture and he is an active partner in the winemaking and running of the new business. I am sure it is both nerve-wracking and exhilarating to be starting out a new project at Laurent's period in his career, but for those of us on the receiving end, it is fascinating to see what he can do with a much wider palette of terroirs than he was accustomed to work with when making the wines at his family's domaine in Morey St. Denis. I am not really sure which wines here are made from purchased grapes, which from purchased must and which from purchased wines, and in proper négociant fashion, Laurent is not always so willing to deal out this information. As is probably correct, one is left simply with the wine in the glass to evaluate and there are an awful lot of very good wines in the Laurent Ponsot lineup of 2017. Monsieur Ponsot was under the weather at the time of my visit, so I tried to hustle through the tasting without plying him with extensive questions, so that he could get back to his sick bed and try to prepare for an upcoming trip to Italy.



Laurent Ponsot, fighting a cold, in his offices in Gilly.

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc “Cuvée du Perce Neige”- Laurent Ponsot

Laurent Ponsot’s 2017 Bourgogne Blanc is quite a fine example of its level, offering up a deep nose of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, a touch of lees and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with good length, vibrant acids and lovely balance on the finish. Good juice. 2018-2030+. **88.**

2017 Meursault “Cuvée du Pandoréa”- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Meursault *villages* bottling from Monsieur Ponsot is really, really good this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine mix of apple, pear, almond, a touch of iodine, chalky soil tones and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, lovely cut and grip and a long, nascently complex and zesty finish. This is lovely. 2018-2040. **91+.**

2017 Meursault “Blagny” Cuvée du Myosotis- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Meursault “Blagny” *chez* Ponsot is outstanding as well, with superb backend lift and cut. The bouquet is quite classical in profile, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a topnote of geranium. On the palate the wine is deep, full, complex and nicely detailed, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, energetic and bouncy finish of impressive complexity. 2018-2045+. **92+.**

2017 Meursault “Charmes” Cuvée de la Centaurée- Laurent Ponsot

Laurent and Clément’s example of 2017 Charmes is outstanding on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a refined aromatic constellation of apple, passion fruit, salty soil tones, almond, a touch of orange zest and iodine. With some extended air, the bouquet develops plenty of upper register floral tones as well. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and really very long on the backend, with a good core, excellent cut and grip and lovely focus and complexity on the very long, poised and beautifully balanced finish. This is superb Charmes. 2020-2045+. **93+.**

2017 Corton-Charlemagne “Cuvée du Kalimeris”- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Corton-Charlemagne from Laurent and Clément Ponsot is also excellent, with a bit more overt ripeness in evidence than in the Meursault premier crus. The bouquet is deep and nascently complex, offering up scents of pear, a touch of tangerine, almond, chalky soil tones, iodine and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, good soil signature and a long, youthful and vibrant finish. Good juice. 2023-2065. **94.**

2017 Bâtard-Montrachet- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Bâtard-Montrachet from Laurent Ponsot is an outstanding example of the vintage and was one of the best bottlings of Bâtard I sampled on this three week swing through the region. The bouquet is bright and compelling, soaring from the glass in a blend of pear, white peach, a touch of fresh almond, great, chalky soil tones, a hint of butter and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with a great core, superb soil signature, excellent focus and grip and outstanding lift on the long, vibrant and very classy finish. A superb bottle. 2023-2060. **96.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge “Cuvée des Peupliers”- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Laurent Ponsot was one of the few wines in the cellar that had already been racked. It was showing nicely, offering up a fine nose of red and black

cherries, coffee, woodsmoke, a good base of soil and a touch of mocha in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, open and nicely broad-shouldered, with a good core and fine length and grip on the wide open finish. A good example. 2018-2033. **88.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée du Aulne”- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Gevrey AC is another very pretty wine that will deliver pleasure early. The nose delivers scents of cherries, red plums, gamebird, a good base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush at the core, with modest tannins, good acids and a long, velvety and nascently complex finish. This will only need a few years in the cellar before it is drinking with generosity and verve. 2021-2045. **89+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Cuvée de la Violette”- Laurent Ponsot

I liked the 2017 Chambolle AC a hair better than the Gevrey, as it is a bit brighter and more vibrant on both the nose and palate. The lovely, red fruity bouquet reveals scents of cherries, strawberries, a hint of beetroot, chalky soil tones, mustard seed and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, lovely soil signature and a long, refined and bouncy finish. Good juice. 2018-2045. **90+.**

2017 Beaune Premier Cru “Cuvée du Noyer”- Laurent Ponsot

Laurent Ponsot’s Beaune “Premier Cru” bottling is made up of fruit from eight different premier crus this year and is a very strong wine. The vibrant nose delivers a fine aromatic constellation of cherries, a touch of blood orange, violets, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of soil tones and a nice dollop of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, vibrant and nicely soil-driven, with a fine core of red fruit, suave tannins and a long, tangy and energetic finish. A lovely bottle of Beaune in the making. 2018-2050. **92+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes” Cuvée du Tilleul- Laurent Ponsot

As I noted last year, Laurent has retained his contract for the vineyards from Domaine des Chézeaux, so the Chambolle “Charmes” and the other wines made from the *fermage* agreement are much the same here as they were at Domaine Ponsot. The 2017 Charmes offers up a lovely and ripe bouquet of red plums, black cherries, beetroot, a touch of chocolate, a fine base of soil, gamebird and a topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with modest tannins, good, tangy acids and a very long, complex and quite plush finish. Good juice. 2022-2050+. **93.**

2017 Clos Vougeot “Cuvée du Cèdre”- Laurent Ponsot

Laurent Ponsot’s Clos Vougeot is from the same source as he used in his last several years at Domaine Ponsot, so the only thing that has changed here is the name and color of the label. This is a very, very good in 2017, offering up a superb nose of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke and mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with very impressive transparency, ripe, suave tannins and a long, complex and vibrant finish of impeccable balance. 2026-2065+. **94.**

2017 Echézeaux- Laurent Ponsot

Laurent Ponsot’s 2017 Echézeaux is a very, very good example of the vineyard. The nose wafts from the glass in a sophisticated blend of black cherries, dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, Vosne spices, woodsmoke and a fine topnote of bitter chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a rock solid core, lovely soil signature, bright acids, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2026-2075. **94+.**

2017 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” Cuvée du Frêne- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Clos de Bèze from Laurent and Clément Ponsot is outstanding. The wine offers up a deep and very classy bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent in personality, with a fine core of black fruit, ripe tannins and a long, complex and impeccably balanced finish. Fine, fine wine in the making here! 2027-2075. **94+**.

2017 Griotte-Chambertin “Cuvée du Saule”- Laurent Ponsot

The 2017 Griotte-Chambertin from the Ponsots is excellent and very much cut from the same stylistic cloth as it was back during Laurent’s time at the helm of Domaine Ponsot in Morey. The ripe and very expressive nose wafts from the glass in a mix of sappy black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, chalky soil tones, grilled meats, mustard seed and a bit of beetroot in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, precise and impressively mineral in personality, with a sappy core, ripe tannins and fine balance and grip on the long, tangy and complex finish. A superb Ponsot Griotte! 2027-2075. **95**.

Flagey-Echézeaux and Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot (Flagey-Echézeaux)

This was my first visit to Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot in Flagey-Echézeaux, as a subscriber has written to me after my spring visit to the region to say that he thought I would really like the style of the wines being made here today. He was absolutely right! The domaine is currently run by Madame Claire Fleurot and Thomas Collardot, with Madame Fleurot in charge of the commercial side of the estate and Monsieur Collardot farming the vineyards and making the wines. Having never been to the cellars before, I was rather astounded and see such a superb lineup of grand crus here, as the domaine owns good parcels in fully six different grand crus: Clos Vougeot, Charmes-Chambertin, Clos de la Roche, Clos St. Denis, Echézeaux and Grands Echézeaux. A couple of these parcels are quite small, with the domaine owning only 18 ares in Grands Echézeaux and 17 ares in Clos St. Denis, but they have a third of a hectare in Charmes-Chambertin, 64 ares in Clos Vougeot and well more than a hectare each in Clos de la Roche and Echézeaux. Not too shabby! There are also lots of old vines here, as their three parcels in Echézeaux were planted in 1945, their vines in the premier cru of Beaumonts are eighty years of age and Clos Vougeot are seventy years old. Monsieur Collardot began harvesting in 2017 on September 9th and most of the wines had not yet been racked at the time of my visit and were showing very well indeed. The percentages of new oak used here seem quite correct, with the village wines seeing about thirty percent, the sole premier cru of Beaumonts fifty percent, and the grand crus mostly fifty percent as well, with the exceptions of the Grands Echézeaux and Clos St. Denis, where there are only three barrels, so two of each are new. The style of the new oak here is on the spicy side, which is not always my favorite for some terroirs, but which seems to work quite nicely with most of the vineyards that the domaine farms. The style of the 2017s here is nicely broad-shouldered, displaying plenty of sappy and pure fruit tones, coupled with excellent signatures of underlying soil. As this was my first visit to Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot, I do not have any real sense of how the wines evolve with bottle age, but everything I tasted was quite impressive and I am already looking forward to getting to know this fine domaine even better in the coming years!



Cellar Master Thomas Collardot of Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* was the only wine from the domaine that had been assembled prior to my visit on the 19th of November, as it was racked a month earlier. The wine is quite pretty, offering up scents of red and black cherries, chocolate, a good base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is medium-full, focused and easy-going in style, with a solid core and no discernable tannin on the finish. A very easy to drink example. 2018-2025. **87**,

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The Chambolle AC bottling from Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot hails all from the *climat* of les Gamares, which lies on the Morey border just below la Bussière. The vines are a mix of 1955 and 1985 plantations and the 2017 version was showing nicely at the time of my visit, offering up a fine bouquet of sappy red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a nice base of soil and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and has a lovely core, with fine attendant soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and fine balance and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. Good juice. 2022-2045. **89+**.

2017 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The domaine's Morey *villages* bottling is a blend of three different *climats*, with the vines averaging forty-five years of age. The 2017 shows lovely precision on the nose, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of cherries, red berries, beetroot, a lovely base of soil, gamebird, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and quite elegant in profile this year,

with a good core of red fruit, lovely transparency and just a touch of tannin perking up the long and tangy finish. I really like this, as it seems more complete than the Chambolle AC this year. 2023-2055. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The Gevrey-Chambertin AC bottling from Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot is also composed of fruit from three different *climats*, with Monsieur Collardot observing that “the average vine age here is a bit older than is the case with the Morey.” The 2017 Gevrey is a fine, red fruity and nicely spicy example of the commune, offering up a nose of cherries, strawberries, mustard seed, gamebird, lovely spice elements, a very good base of soil and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and nicely soil-driven, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long, nicely reserved finish. This will want a year or two more in the cellar than the Chambolle or Morey AC bottlings, but it too will be a fine village wine with a bit of bottle age. 2024-2055+. **90+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

Monsieur Collardot’s Vosne *villages* bottling hails from two different *lieux à dits*, la Violette and les Quartiers de Nuits. Both of these lie on the border of the Clos Vougeot, with half of the latter actually included in Echézeaux. The two *climats* are fermented separately and then they will be blended at the end of their *elevage*, so this wine was not quite as on form at the time of my visit as some of the other AC cuvées (we made an approximation of the final blend out of a few casks). There is good depth on the nose of the 2017, with scents of red berries, cherries, mustard seed, gamebird, dark soil and cedar wafting from the glass. On the palate the wine is going to be pure, suave and silky, with a good core, fine soil signature and moderate tannins, but it was not quite on form at the time of my visit, so I have scored it in a range. 2024-2055. **89-90**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Premier Cru”- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The Vosne “Premier Cru” from the domaine includes twenty percent de-classified Echézeaux in the blend, combined with their holdings in Beaumonts to make a properly-sized cuvée, so the wine is labeled simply as Premier Cru, despite it mostly being old vine Beaumonts. This was really showing well at the time of my visit, jumping from the glass in a blaze of raspberries, cherries, Vosne spices, gamebird, a fine base of dark soil tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very nicely structured, with a very good core of red fruit, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. I really like the backend energy of this wine. 2026-2065. **92**.

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The 2017 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot is a fine bottle in the making. The estate owns two separate parcels in the Clos and the vines are all old, so the average here is seventy years of age. The wine sees fifty percent new wood and the 2017 version offers up a bright bouquet of cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, a lovely array of soil tones, woodsmoke, mustard seed and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and soil-driven finish. Good juice. 2027-2075. **93+**.

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The domaine’s Charmes-Chambertin bottling hails from vines planted in 1968 in Mazoyrès-Chambertin, and like the Clos Vougeot, this was raised in half new wood in 2017. The wine offers up a lovely and quite red fruity nose of strawberries, cherries, mustard seed, gamebird, a very good base of soil tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with good transparency, fine-grained tannins and very good

length and grip on the youthful and promising finish. Another very good example. 2027-2065+. **93.**

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The Echézeaux from Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot hails from three of the *climats* that make up this grand cru, with a small plot of les Treux mixed in with larger parcels in Orveaux and les Poulallières. The reason that the family decides to add twenty percent Echézeaux to their Beaumonts is that the other parcels in these *climats* were all planted in 1945, so by moving the younger vine Echézeaux into the Premier Cru bottling, it allows the domaine's Echézeaux cuvée to all be old vines. The 2017 version is excellent, offering up a deep and sappy nose of red and black cherries, raspberries, *pigeon*, complex soil tones, a touch of chocolate, Vosne spices and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, sappy and quite full-bodied, with excellent mid-palate depth, fine focus and grip and a long, well balanced and ripely tannic finish. This is a fine example in the making. 2027-2075. **93+.**

2017 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The 2017 Clos de la Roche from Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot was really singing at the time of my visit and this is clearly going to be an outstanding wine when it has had a chance to blossom. The nose jumps from the glass in a fine blend of cherries, beetroot, a touch of blood orange, venison, mustard seed, coffee and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of red fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and excellent length and grip on the long, focused and vibrant finish. This has outstanding backend energy. 2026-2075. **94.**

2017 Clos St. Denis- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

As there are only three barrels of Clos St. Denis in the cellars here, two of the casks are new and the wine was a bit behind the other grand crus in terms of absorbing its new wood at the time of my visit. The results were a bit of palate "pinching" in late November, but this was certainly just a stage that the wine was going through and there was more than adequate stuffing to carry the wood very well with a bit more *elevage*. The 2017 Clos St. Denis offers up a fine nose of cherries, red plums, gamebird, mustard seed, excellent minerality and a fair bit of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and beautifully transparent, with a good core and fine focus and grip. The tannins are nicely buried in fruit here, and all that is needed is a bit more time for the new wood to get absorbed into the fine core of fruit. This is very, very good, but I wonder if it might not be even more interesting with one new cask and a couple of older barrels? 2028-2065+. **93.**

2017 Grands Echézeaux- Domaine Coquard Loison Fleurot

The number of barrels for the Grands Echézeaux from Monsieur Collardot is the same as the Clos St. Denis and the wine also sees two new casks out of three. However, at the time of my visit, this was carrying its slightly higher percentage of new oak a bit more seamlessly than the Clos St. Denis and was really singing. The nose delivers a fine constellation of red plums, cherries, Vosne spices, cocoa powder, an excellent and complex base of soil, venison, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and vibrant finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2070. **94+.**

Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair (Vosne-Romanée)

Louis-Michel Liger-Belair has made very pretty, silky wines in 2017. Stylistically, they are quite similar to the wines from Jean-Nicolas Méo this year, with gorgeous, complex and

perfumed bouquets, sweet, velvety fruit tones and plenty of underlying terroir, but without quite the mid-palate density and structural chassis of the true vins de gardes of the vintage. They are beautifully balanced wines that will offer up pleasure fairly early, but which should still keep quite nicely in the cellar, despite not having the great mid-palate stuffing of some of the other top collections to be found in the Côte d'Or in 2017. Louis-Michel and his team started picking on September 9th in 2017 and the domaine averaged thirty-four hectoliters per hectare in this vintage, which is hardly excessive. Of course, the village of Vosne-Romanée was principally spared frost damage in 2016, so there was not the same pent up energy in the vines from the previous year, with the exception of a few vineyards, such as Echézeaux. Louis-Michel had already racked some of his wines in the cellar, beginning in September, as he wished to guard the beautiful fruit tones in the wines, so the villages level bottlings and all of the premier crus based on clay soils had already been racked by the time of my visit on the 19th of November. The premier crus based in limestone soils and the grand crus had not yet been racked. The wines across the board are very, very good in 2017, but more than a few were rather easy going structurally and will drink a bit sooner than is customary here in a great vintage, whereas others have the ripe, tannic chassis to age very, very long and gracefully.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Grandes Vignes” Blanc- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Clos des Grandes Vignes Blanc from Domaine Liger-Belair had been racked only two weeks prior to my visit, but the wine was still showing very well indeed. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up scents of pear, apple, almond, orange peel, lovely soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright full-bodied and wide open in personality, with a succulent core, sound framing acids and fine length and grip on the already quite delicious finish. This will not make old bones, but it will make plenty of friends over the course of its life. 2018-2030. **92**,

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Liger-Belair Vosne-Romanée *villages* bottling is a real charmer, offering up a vibrant and very attractive bouquet of raspberries, cherries, cocoa powder, a fine base of soil, just a bit of smokiness and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and silky, with respectable depth at the core, just a touch of backend tannin and a long, juicy and complex finish. This too will drink splendidly from release. 2018-2035+. **88+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

As is typical in the Liger-Belair cellars, the 2017 la Colombière offers up quite a bit more depth on both the nose and palate than the straight Vosne AC bottling. The fine bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of red and black raspberries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely sappy at the core, with a bit of suave tannin, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and velvety finish. A lovely *villages*. 2021-2045. **90**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Clos du Château”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Clos du Château has a bit more refinement and energy than the la Colombière, which is probably due to the difference between the chalky soils of the former and the primarily clay soils of the latter. The bouquet is just gorgeous, offering up a vibrant constellation of raspberries, beetroot, a complex base of limestone soil, Vosne spices, duck and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already silky on the attack, with a solid core, modest

tannins and fine length and grip on the focused and bouncy finish. This is really pretty. 2021-2045. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Lavières”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

There are only two barrels of the 2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Lavières” in the Liger-Belair cellars this year, but the wine is quite fine and will be worth a special search to find. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a pure, black fruity mix of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused on the attack, with a lovely core of pure fruit, fine soil signature and a bit of backend tannin perking up the long and complex finish. Quite an elegant young Nuits. 2023-2045+. **90+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis-Michel Liger-Belair included a bit of whole clusters in his 2017 les Chaumes. The wine is quite stylish, offering up a very pure nose of black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows a nice touch of sap at the core, with fine transparency, fairly gentle tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This will last decidedly longer than the *villages* level wines in 2017, but will not need more than a couple of years more bottle age before it too starts to drink with generosity and style. 2025-2065. **91**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Suchots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis Michel’s 2017 Suchots is an extremely elegant wine this year. The bouquet is excellent, wafting from the glass in a complex and vibrant blend of black raspberries, dark berries, duck, bonfire, Vosne spices, a fine base of dark soil tones and nutty new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, pure and refined, with a good sappy core, modest tannins and a long, complex and beautifully delineated finish. Fine juice. 2022-2055+. **92**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brûlées”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Liger-Belair aux Brûlées is a beautifully perfumed and velvety example of the vintage, but it is not particularly structured and will drink well fairly early on in its evolution. The bouquet is flat out beautiful, offering up scents of black raspberries, black cherries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, duck, Vosne spices and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already very tasty, with a velvety attack, a sappy core of black fruit, lovely soil signature and a long, bouncy and modestly tannic finish. This is going to drink with great style from a fairly early age. 2023-2055+. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

To this point in the lineup, the Nuits “aux Cras” showed the best mid-palate stuffing and just a bit more emphatic structural elements of any of the wines. The bouquet is excellent, wafting from the glass in a blend of black plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, dark soil, a touch of nutskin and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy, with a lovely signature of soil, ripe, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the long and complex finish. This is going to last longer than the Brûlées. 2024-2065. **93**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Grandes Vignes”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Clos des Grandes Vignes was just a touch reductive when first served, but the wine opens up quite briskly with just a bit of swirling and shows outstanding potential. The bouquet is pure and loaded with sappy fruit, delivering scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, nutskin, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and soil-driven, with fine-grained tannins,

excellent focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very, very promising finish. 2025-2065. **93+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis-Michel’s 2017 Petits Monts is supremely elegant and perfumed this year, but, at the same time, it has better depth and a bit more structural conviction than the Brûlées. The nose is flat out beautiful, soaring from the glass in a complex blend of black raspberries, black plums, sweet dark berries, Vosne spice elements, duck, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very refined in personality, with a sappy core of black fruit, great mineral drive, modest tannins and lovely lift on the long and complex finish. This will be utterly seductive once it is fully mature. 2023-2065. **93+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “aux Reignots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

As is always the case in the Liger-Belair cellars, there is a step up to the Reignots from the other fine premier crus here and this is again the case with the beautiful 2017 bottling. The bouquet is pure and flamboyant, soaring from the glass in a blaze of black raspberries, plums, smoked duck, a very complex base of minerality, black tea, smoky new oak and a topnote of Oriental spices. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very complex, with a silky attack, a sappy core, lovely soil signature and a long, moderately tannic, fine-grained and vibrant finish of glorious complexity. Fine, fine juice. 2023-2065+. **94+**.

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Liger-Belair is truly exceptional this year. The bouquet is very deep and complex, offering up a constellation of black cherries, black raspberries, a touch of red plum, gamebird, a complex base of soil tones and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven in personality, with ripe, suave tannins, good acids and excellent length and grip on the long and very classy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2027-2075. **95**.

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2017 Liger-Belair Echézeaux offers up plenty of aromatic fireworks, but it cannot quite keep pace with the stellar Clos Vougeot on the palate. The celestial nose delivers scents of black raspberries, sweet dark berries, black plums, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, Vosne spices and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a good core, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is very seductive wine, but it does not possess quite the same backend conviction of the Clos Vougeot. 2026-2075. **94**.

2017 La Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

As always, the 2017 La Romanée from Domaine Liger-Belair is a brilliant wine in the making. The complex and perfumed bouquet soars from the glass in a blaze of red and black plums, black raspberries, black cherries, a very complex base of soil tones, raw cocoa, Vosne spices, musky floral tones and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core, great mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the very long, very, very complex finish. Great juice. 2027-2085. **97**.



Domaine Méo-Camuzet (Vosne-Romanée)

I really liked the style and shape of the Domaine Méo-Camuzet wines in 2017, but this is another domaine where the wines are more forward and seductive in style than in most other top vintages and will probably drink a bit sooner as a result. Stylistically, they are cut very much from the same cloth as Louis-Michel Liger-Belair's wines this year. In certain respects, Jean-Nicolas Méo's wines in 2017 harken back a bit to the beautifully seductive set of wines he produced in his first vintage of 1989, albeit without quite the same out of the blocks voluptuousness of the '89s. But, there are plenty of similarities to my mind, and as I was a very big fan of the 1989s back in the day, it is not surprising that I like the 2017s here very much as well. At the time of my visit on November 8th, the 2017 Bourgogne rouge, Marsannay and Fixin had just been racked into tank in preparation for bottling in September, while the rest of the red wine lineup was still in barrel and not yet racked. Harvest got started here on September 6th of 2017, and then was stopped during the rain of the 9th and 10th of the month, before getting rolling again on the 11th and wrapping up on the 14th of September. I did not taste the full range of négociant cuvées here this year, as Cellar Master Peer Reis had an appointment in Beaune a few hours after our tasting commenced, and given my penchant to move slowly through the wines here, he very wisely made a representative selection of the négociant bottlings to include in our tasting (and that way, only ended up an hour late for his appointment!). I started out the visit sharing the tasting with some very nice folks from Scandinavia, but as they had an appointment only an hour after we began (rather ambitious scheduling I thought, give the size of the range at Domaine Méo-Camuzet!), they raced far ahead of me in their progress through the lineup and the second half of our tasting happily allowed me to ply Monsieur Reis with questions about the

vintage chez Méo. Jean-Nicolas Méo and Peer Reis decided on using a bit less whole clusters in 2017 than they have in recent vintages, which makes sense, as the heat spike in late August sent sugars soaring upwards rather briskly and the ripeness of the stems was not always able to keep pace with the sugar accumulation. Normally, we also indulge in a bit of conversation about other topics besides the vintage during our tastings, comparing perspectives from our opposite sides of the Atlantic, but as Peer was destined to be in a hurry towards the end of the tasting, we put our philosophical discussion on the back burner and tried to focus exclusively on the wines this year! Of course, it is never easy to miss an opportunity for a bit of intellectual exchange from the varying perspectives of America and Europe, particularly over a range of fine young Domaine Méo-Camuzet samples, so though I covered all of my ground in due time and released Peer to get out of the cellars and tear off to Beaune, I did regret not having a chance to hear his current views of the world situation in our interesting historical epoch. I should note that I took the Route Nationale back down to Beaune after our tasting, figuring I might impede his progress on the autoroute and was already responsible for his late departure from the domaine!

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

As the 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* had been racked nearly two months prior to my visit, it was showing quite well. The wine has lovely depth and stuffing on the palate and offers up a pretty nose of black plums, black cherries, chocolate and a nice touch of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and really has good depth at the core for its level, with very little tannin, good focus and a long, silky and already very tasty finish. Good juice. 2018-2030+. **88.**

2017 Marsannay- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

As Marsannay was one of the most heavily-frosted villages in 2016, I was curious how the Méo-Camuzet example would show in the following vintage, and the wine is nicely forward in style and ready for early drinking. The nose is quite stylish, wafting from the glass in a blend of cassis, grilled meats, French Roast, woodsmoke and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is fullish, forward and already succulent, with a nice, plump core and just a whisper of backend tannin perking up the bright and very tasty finish. This is going to drink very nicely from the outset. 2018-2035+. **88+.**

2017 Fixin- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Fixin from Méo-Camuzet is also a lovely wine in the making, and as the vineyards here principally escaped frost damage in 2016, the wine is quite classical in proportion this year. The nose is lovely and shows just a bit more definition than the Marsannay, delivering a fine blend of black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, a good base of minerality and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and modestly tannic, with a lovely core of black fruit, nice soil signature and a long, discreetly tannic finish. Fine juice. 2018-2035+. **89.**

2017 Fixin “Clos Chapitre”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Fixin “Clos Chapitre” from Jean-Nicolas Méo is also a fine bottle in the making, though this too is cut in a more forward style and will not demand any extended bottle age to blossom and start to show its wares. The very stylish bouquet offers up a blend of sweet dark berries, a touch of licorice, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, espresso and a topnote of gamebird. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a suave attack, a respectable core, moderate tannins and a long, focused and nicely complex finish. This is very tasty and elegant, but not a big step up from the very good *villages* bottling this year. 2020-2040. **89+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

I really enjoyed the 2017 Gevrey-Chambertin from Domaine Méo-Camuzet this year, as this is an archetypical synthesis of the village and the vintage. The wine is deep and nicely sappy on the nose, delivering a lovely blend of red and black cherries, chocolate, a touch of meatiness, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil tones and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very nicely structured, with a very good core of fruit, lovely focus and grip and impressive backend energy on the long and complex finish. This is a first class *villages* this year. 2023-2045+. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Nuits AC is not entirely domaine-grown fruit this year, as the cuvée was augmented with some purchased grapes. The wine was showing a bit more reserve on both the nose and palate than the fine Gevrey *villages* that preceded it, but with a bit of coaxing offers up scents of dark berries, woodsmoke, venison, espresso, dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite youthfully reticent at the present time, with a solid core of fruit, good soil signature and a long, moderately tannic finish. This is very good as well, but I have the impression that when it is made exclusively from estate-grown fruit, it shows more early sex appeal than this hybrid bottling in 2017. 2023-2050. **89+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Chambolle “les Cras” is also made from purchased fruit, and as is the case in many other cellars where the grapes from Chambolle hail from another *vigneron*, there is a bit of evidence that the farmer here was reluctant to limit yields too much in 2017, in the wake of the devastating losses to frost the year before. The wine is very good, but a touch easy-going structurally. The bouquet is nicely reserved, offering up scents of black cherries, woodsmoke, chalky soil tones, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with good soil signature, modest tannins and a long, nascently complex and potentially silky finish. This will be very seductive when it is ready to drink, but will not be one of the top recent vintages of this bottling *chez Méo*. 2025-2065. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Perrières”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Perrières” from Méo-Camuzet is quite a black fruity interpretation of the vineyard this year, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, stony minerality, *pigeon*, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and quite elegant in profile out of the blocks, with a sappy core of black fruit, very good backend mineral drive, suave tannins and a long, promising finish. A lovely bottle in the making, with the inherent elegance of the vintage very much in evidence and a bit better mid-palate stuffing than the les Cras. 2026-2060. **91+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Domaine Méo-Camuzet Vosne-Romanée AC is truly excellent this year and, to my palate, a notable step up from their Nuits *villages* in this vintage. The beautiful bouquet offers up a refined blend of plums, black raspberries, cocoa powder, duck, Vosne spices, a lovely base of soil and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows lovely mineral undertow, with a fine core of fruit, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. I drank a lot of the 1989 Vosne AC from Jean-Nicolas in its youth, as it was irresistible, and other than the 1989 version having toasty oak tones and the 2017 more of a spicy oak signature, the wines are extremely similar in style and this is going to be an excellent village wine. It will be approachable early on, but based on my experience with the 1989 version,

I would suggest letting it rest in the cellar for four or five years and let its secondary layering emerge. 2023-2055. **91+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “aux Murgers”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Murgers *chez* Méo is another lovely and potentially velvety wine in the making. The bouquet is sappy, pure and already quite expressive, wafting from the glass in a refined mix of black plums, black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, espresso and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and nicely sappy at the core, with lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex and seamless finish that closes with fine soil signature and grip. This is not a powerful vintage of Murgers, but the wine has fine intensity of flavor and is loaded with personality. 2025-2065+. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “aux Boudots”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Boudots 2017 was one of the wines where Jean-Nicolas Méo decided to include some stems, so the wine is twelve percent whole clusters this year. It is a fine, fine wine in the making, offering up a complex aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, black cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a touch of sweet stem spice, dark soil tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely structured, with excellent mid-palate depth, fine focus and grip and a long, very well balanced and ripely tannic finish. This has more of the customary structural chassis one expects from the domaine’s two Nuits premier crus, so will need a couple more years in the cellar to blossom than the Murgers 2017, but it is going to be excellent. 2027-2065+. **93**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 les Chaumes from Méo-Camuzet was showing very well indeed at the time of my visit, with more of the reserved personality found in the Boudots than the already seductive side of the vintage exemplified by the Murgers. The bouquet is pure and classy, offering up a promising mix of black raspberries, cassis, dark chocolate, lovely minerality, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and suave on the attack, with a sappy core, fine soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish that will be plenty complex once it blossoms and starts to drink with generosity. Fine juice. 2026-2060+. **92+**.

2017 Corton “Perrière”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Corton “Perrière” from Domaine Méo-Camuzet included fifteen percent whole clusters in this vintage. The bouquet is simply superb, jumping from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, bonfire, venison, a touch of cinnamon (from the stem inclusion), stony soil tones, espresso and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with excellent nascent complexity, a respectable core, fine mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic and well-balanced finish. This is very promising in its early complexity, but does not have more depth than the top preceding premier crus in the lineup. 2028-2075+. **92+**.

2017 Corton “Clos Rognet”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Clos Rognet *chez* Méo is a step up in depth and grand cru structural conviction from the pretty Corton “Perrière”. The bouquet is deep and already shows off excellent early complexity, delivering a constellation of red and black currants, dark berries, complex, clove-like spice tones, smoked meats, cedar and an exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, beautifully soil-driven and sappy at the core, with ripe, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, tangy and complex finish. Rognet can sometimes be a bit of a brute out of the blocks and take quite a bit of time for its inherent elegance to start to show, but this is emphatically not the case with this outstanding 2017 version. Great juice! 2028-2080. **94+**.



Autumn colors on the grapevines crawling up the walls at Domaine Méo-Camuzet.

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

I always like the Méo-Camuzet Clos Vougeot, but my gut feeling is always that this is the one wine in the cellar that absolutely calls out for more “one wine barrels” and less new oak. I just have this gut feeling that there is a lot more lurking here in terms of *terroir* expression that could come to the fore with a gentle oak regimen, but Jean-Nicolas Méo notes that I say this very often about a lot of other wines in Burgundy and it is not specific to this bottling. However, I would love to see just one vintage where this wine was raised in twenty-five percent new casks and seventy-five percent one wine barrels, as it would be a very interesting experiment. Plea over. The 2017 Echézeaux was raised in eighty percent new oak this year and offer sup a very pretty and nascently complex bouquet of red and black cherries, cocoa powder, plums, a nicely complex signature of soil, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and elegant in profile, with lovely mid-palate purity, fine focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic finish. Good juice. 2027-2075. **93+**.

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Echézeaux from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is an excellent wine in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a fine combination of black plums, sweet dark berries, bonfire, venison, dark soil tones and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely suave on the attack, with a good core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, moderate tannins and a long,

vibrant and complex finish. This is a classic bottle of Echézeaux in the making, which will be velvety and very refined when it is ready to drink. 2027-2075. **94.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brulées”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Putting my nose in the glass of the 2017 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brulées” from Jean-Nicolas Méo took me back to the 1989 again, as this wine has that same early, seductive appeal on both the nose and palate that Jean-Nicolas’ first vintage displayed! The wine is flat out stunning, offering up a superb aromatic constellation of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, refined and velvety already on the attack, with a full-bodied format, a lovely core of sappy black fruit, great mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and beautifully complex finish. Great juice. 2025-2075. **95.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Cros Parantoux”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

How do you know you were born of Irish descent? When the barrel sample of the Méo Cros Parantoux is the only wine in the cellar that shows a bit reductively! With some coaxing, the 2017 version of Cros Parantoux eventually starts to offer up a promising nose of red and black raspberries, Vosne spices, duck, a complex base of minerality, cedary new oak and lovely upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is suave, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a sappy core, beautiful backend mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. I miss the old days, when I used to drink quite a bit of Cros Parantoux! 2027-2075+. **95.**

2017 Richebourg- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Méo-Camuzet Richebourg is a superb bottle in the making. The bouquet is pure, refined and impressively complex out of the blocks, delivering a mix of plums, red and black cherries, Vosne spice tones, chocolate, a lovely base of soil, a hint of mustard seed and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and utterly refined in personality, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, tangy and complex finish. Great juice. 2028-2080+. **96.**

Vins Blancs

2017 Saint Romain Blanc- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The fruit for the Méo-Camuzet Saint Romain *blanc* was picked on September 8th in 2017, and the wine has that early accessibility and succulence of the more fruit-driven examples of the vintage. The bouquet is very pretty, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, quince, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and citrus zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, juicy and wide open in personality, with a good core of fruit, sound framing acids, fine focus and very good length and grip. A very tasty bottle. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2017 Meursault AC from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is a step up in terms of cut, grip and mineral drive than the very pretty Saint Romain. The nose here is youthfully complex, delivering a fine blend of apple, hazelnut, a touch of tangerine, a complex base of chalky soil tones, dried flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and beautifully focused, with an impressive core of fruit, excellent mineral drive (particularly for a *villages*) and very good length on the poised, nascently complex and racy finish. A top flight example. 2018-2040. **91.**

2017 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Domaine Méo-Camuzet's 2017 Corton-Charlemagne is an outstanding young wine, with all of the depth, mineral drive and structural integrity one expects from this grand cru. The nose offers up a fine constellation of apple, pear, iodine, chalky minerality, a touch of orange peel and a judicious framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, pure and rock solid at the core, with excellent balance and grip, impressive backend mineral drive, zesty acids and a very long, nascently complex and promising finish. 2022-2050. **94.**

Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg (Vosne-Romanée)

The Mugneret family has once again fashioned an absolutely beautiful set of wines in the 2017 vintage. Since the sudden and tragic passing of Dr. Georges Mugneret all the way back in 1988, this outstanding domaine in Vosne-Romanée has been run with great style by the Mugneret sisters, Marie-Christine and Marie-Andrée (with plenty of assistance from their mother, Madame Jacqueline Mugneret), but the next generation of the family is now starting to arrive full-time at the domaine and the Mugneret sisters have now been joined in the administration of the family estate by three of their daughters, Lucie (daughter of Marie-Christine), Florence and Fannie (daughters of Marie-Andrée), and the foundation is being set for the future of this superb estate. One aspect of the preparation for an eventual generational change of the guard at Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg has been the excavation of a new cellar extension here, which has allowed for far more room for barrels and made the general logistics in the cellar far, far easier for the family and its team. The timing has been perfect, as the family's long-running metayage agreement with Fabrice Vigot expired after the 2016 vintage, so the Mugnerets have had returned to their parcels of Bourgogne, Nuits St. Georges AC, Vosne-Romanée AC and Echézeaux that were rented out previously, and all four of these cuvées chez Mugneret are now a bit larger than has been the case in the past. The Mugnerets began harvesting in 2017 on September 4th and had brought in every single bunch prior to the rainy weekend of the 9th and 10th of the month. The malos were "normal" in their duration in 2017 and finished up in the spring, so the entire cellar was racked in midsummer of 2018 and the wines were absolutely singing at the time of my visit. During the summer, the domaine decided to do a green harvest anywhere that seemed likely to over-produce from the frosts of 2016, so that yields were quite normal in 2017 and the wines have the depth and precision to prove it, not to mention quite classic structural elements that promise a very long life in bottle.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugnerets make one of the very finest examples of Bourgogne rouge in the entire Côte d'Or, so I was very happy to see that the crop size was again back to normal, after only having three casks of this wine in 2016 due to the frosts. The wine is lovely in 2017, offering up a bright and sappy nose of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, violets and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, tangy and shows lovely mid-palate depth (particularly for Bourgogne), with a touch of backend tannin and fine length and grip on the finish. Good juice. 2021-2040. **89.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Mugneret-Gibourg Vosne AC is quite red fruity and spicy this year, wafting from the glass in a perfumed blend of raspberries, black plums, cocoa powder, lovely minerality, duck, a plethora of Vosne spices, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full,

tangy and nicely reserved in personality, with a fine core, excellent transparency, ripe, suave tannins and a long, vibrant finish. A high class *villages*, as always! 2022-2050+. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “au Bas de Combes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

This bottling has previously been labeled as Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”, but as there was only a single barrel, it was pretty hard to find in the market. Now that two more casks’ worth of wine have come back with the end of the sharecropping agreement with Fabrice Vigot, the Mugnerets now have enough to make the wine a bit more widely available and have decided to change the label and put the name of the *climat* on it, so it will now be labeled as “au Bas de Combes”, though only the label has changed, as the domaine’s vines have always been in this *lieu à dit*. The 2017 version is superb, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a fine blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, a fine base of soil, *pigeon* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with a sappy core of black fruit, ripe tannins and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. 2025-2055+. **91**.



Five lovely femmes Mugnerets: from the left, Marie-Christine, Lucie, Florence, Fannie and Marie-Andrée.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Vignes Rondes *chez* Mugneret is very elegant this year, befitting the vintage. The nose is pure and classy, offering up scents of black plums, black cherries, dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke, a touch of nutskin and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, ripe

tannins and lovely length on the poised and well-balanced finish. A lovely Nuits in the making. 2028-2065+. **92.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Chaignots was raised in fifty percent new wood this year, which I think is up slightly from previous vintages. The wine was showing very nicely in November, with a reserved personality tied to very pretty sappiness to its fruit component. The bouquet is quite black fruity this year, offering up sweet dark berries, black cherries, gamebird chalky soil tones, violets, bitter chocolate and a vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully structured, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, suave, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex and vibrant finish. This is really, really good. 2025-2065+. **92+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Feusselottes was also raised in half new barrels in this vintage. The wine is lovely and really shows both the elegant and sappy side of the year, as the nose wafts from the glass in a perfumed blend of black cherries, red plums, chalky minerality, *pigeon*, a nice touch of mustard seed, violets and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite sophisticated in its structural chassis, with a lovely core, excellent transparency, refined tannins and a long, tangy and very energetic finish. I love the backend lift here. 2025-2065. **93.**

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The family's parcels in Echézeaux were quite badly frosted in 2016 and this seemed to show just a little in the 2017 version of the wine. It is not that the wine is *fluide* on the palate, as the depth at the core is very good here, but there seems to be just a touch less energy to this wine in 2017 than what is found in the other two grand crus, not to mention the top premier crus this year. Perhaps it was just the stage that the wine was going through at the time of my visit? The bouquet is certainly lovely, as it delivers a fine mix of plums, sweet dark berries, cocoa powder, duck, lovely spices tones, a fine base of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure on the attack, full-bodied and quite complex, with a good core, refined tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. I may have just been a touch hyper sensitive about this wine, but with the fireworks in abundance with the other two grand crus, this wine was just a tad subdued in comparison- though still excellent. 2027-2080. **93+.**

2017 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Ruchottes-Chambertin from the Mugnerets is an outstanding wine, with both the nose and palate absolutely classic in profile. The stellar nose soars from the glass in a blaze of black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of fresh nutmeg, vanillin oak and a discreet topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, refined and very energetic in profile, with a sappy core, great soil signature, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the very long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. This will be both velvety and perfumed when it is fully mature. 2029-2085+. **96.**

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2017 Mugneret Clos Vougeot is also stellar in this vintage. The complex and very pure bouquet offers up a refined constellation of plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil, violets, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully soil-driven, with a sappy core, great focus and grip and a very long, very elegant and ripely tannic, seamless finish. This has vibrancy and breed to burn! 2030-2090. **96+.**



Domaine Georges Noëllat (Vosne-Romanée)

Maxime Cheurlin has made a fine lineup of 2017s. As Monsieur Cheurlin has expanded his négociant bottlings made from purchased grapes in the last few vintages, there is a bit of variation in terms of style in his roster of 2017s, with some a bit more forward and seductive out of the blocks, with others more structured and deeper, with the sappiness of the vintage nicely framed by fine-grained tannins, but the overall quality level is exemplary in whatever variation of style a given wine might demonstrate. The cellar had not yet been racked at the time of my visit on the 8th of November, so the wines were in a very good mood to be tasted and everything was showing very well. The négociant bottlings from Monsieur Cheurlin are labeled as Maxime Cheurlin Noëllat, rather than Domaine Georges Noëllat, and I have listed them correctly this year (after overlooking this in the first couple of vintages where wines from purchased grapes were produced). I was very happy to see the full roster of Monsieur Cheurlin's wines in the lineup this year, as the frost damage of 2016 took certain bottlings out of the mix, and in addition to the full roster from both the domaine and from purchased grapes of the past, there was also a fine new addition to the tasting this year, as Maxime has started to produce a bottling of Clos Vougeot as well in 2017. These grapes come from the same vigneron that he is able to buy his grapes in Chambolle "Feusselottes", with the parcel of vines he now exploits in Clos Vougeot hailing from the southern side of the vineyard, near Grands Echézeaux. Like all of the grand crus in the cellar this year, it was raised entirely in new oak, but carries it seamlessly. It is a fine new addition to what is a growing and superb lineup of top vineyard sites.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The Bourgogne *rouge* bottling from Domaine Georges Noëllat hails from two parcels of vines, with one situated in Vosne and the other in Nuits. The wine in 2017 is showing more of its Vosne side, as it is bright and red fruity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is a fine blend of raspberries, cherries, a nice touch of soil, Vosne spices and a dollop of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and just a touch lean in the mid-palate, with a bit of backend tannin that needs to soften up before it is ready for primetime. This is very tasty, but just a touch *fluide* in comparison to the top examples I tasted of Bourgogne from the vintage. 2019-2030. **87.**

2017 Hautes Côte de Nuits- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

The 2017 Hautes Côte de Nuits from Maxime Cheurlin is more black fruity in personality than the Bourgogne from estate fruit, offering up a very pretty nose of black raspberries, dark berries, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is medium-full, focused and nicely transparent in personality, with just a touch of tannin and lovely length and balance on the finish. This too seems just a touch *fluide* at the core, but perhaps both of these wines will put on a bit of weight over the winter? A stylish and tasty wine in any case. 2018-2030+. **87+.**

2017 Côte de Nuits Villages- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

Maxime Cheurlin's 2017 Côte de Nuits Villages is a step up in mid-palate depth from the previous two wines and really a fine example of its level and the vintage. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of black cherries, black raspberries, espresso, dark soil tones, a nice touch of spice and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is fullish, soil-driven and tangy, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a dollop of backend tannin perking up the long and tasty finish. Good juice- from vines in Comblanchien. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

This is a new bottling for Monsieur Cheurlin, all hailing from the *climat* of les Echézeaux, which lies high up on the slope, not far from Domaine Roumier. The vines are forty years of age and the 2017 was raised in one-third new oak this year. The wine offers up a lovely bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, chalky soil tones, raw cocoa, violets and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, suave on the attack and nicely precise, with a good core, modest tannins and fine length and grip on the vibrant finish. This is a very good AC. 2012-2050. **90.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The domaine bottling of Nuits AC from the 2017 vintage is also a fine example, delivering a pure and complex bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, and focused, with a nice sappy core of black fruit, fine soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2022-2050+. **90+.**

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “en Champs”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

The 2017 Gevrey “en Champs” from Monsieur Cheurlin was my favorite of his strong range of *villages* bottlings this year. The wine is made from fifty year-old vines and offers up an excellent bouquet of black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, a bit of bonfire, dark soil tones and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely sappy at the core, with lovely mineral drive, suave tannins, bright acids and fine length and grip on the beautifully balanced finish. This is really good this year! 2022-2050. **91.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The 2017 Vosne-Romanée from Domaine Georges Noëllat is also very good indeed, with a very seductive personality right out of the blocks. The fine nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black raspberries, sweet dark berries, a touch of fresh nutmeg, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and velvety on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, tangy acids and a long, modestly tannic and complex finish. Thought this is going to be delicious right from release, I would be inclined to give it just a year or two in the cellar and allow its secondary layers to emerge. Another lovely AC this year. 2020-2045+. **90+**.

2017 Beaune “Tuvelains”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

Last year, Monsieur Cheurlin had to blend his two new premier crus together to make a single, viably-sized cuvée, but happily, they are on their own in 2017. Tuvelains is one of the lowest lying premier crus on the slope, next door to Chouacheux, and Maxime works with fifty year-old vines here. The 2017 Tuvelains was raised in fifty percent new oak and to my palate, was just a bit more new oaky than I like (or this was at least the case at the time of my visit). The bouquet offers up plenty of sappy goodness in its mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, dark soil tones, violets and the aforementioned, spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with good soil signature, moderate tannins and fine length and grip on the new oaky finish. This just needs time to better integrate its new wood, but I would have liked it better with either less spicy new wood (more vanilla and less *pain épice* character) or a lower percentage of new wood, or both. But, that said, there is a really good wine here under the oak and plenty of stuffing to absorb the wood with a bit of bottle age. 2023-2060. **90+**.

2017 Beaune “Clos de Minotte”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

I cannot recall ever having tasted an example of Clos de Minotte, but it turns out that this premier cru is very well-situated, high up on the slope, sandwiched between aux Cras and Champs Pimont. These vines are also approximately fifty years of age and the wine was showing less new oak influence than the Tuvelains at the time of my visit. The bouquet of the inaugural 2017 vintage from Maxime Cheurlin offers up a fine blend of cherries, plums, chalky soil tones, lovely floral elements and a nice, gentle touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, fresh and vibrant, with a good core of red fruit, lovely length and grip, moderate tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. There is more sappy mid-palate depth to the Tuvelains this year, but this wine has the superior balance out of the blocks. Both wines will end up being very good. 2023-2060. **90+**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Echézeaux”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

The 2017 Gevrey “Echézeaux” is another strong *villages* bottling from Monsieur Cheurlin. The bouquet is pure and nicely black fruity, offering up a vibrant blend of black raspberries, black cherries, espresso, gamebird, dark soil tones, a nice touch of spice and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with impressive complexity, suave tannins, good acids and fine length and grip on the seamless and very classy finish. First class AC. 2023-2060. **91**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Fontenys”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

Last year the 2016 Fontenys was in plain malo still at the time of my visit, so this was first real look at this relatively new bottling from Monsieur Cheurlin. The wine has turned out beautifully in 2017, as it offers up a fine aromatic constellation of cassis, black cherries, bitter chocolate, grilled meats, woodsmoke, black minerality and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very elegant in profile, with an excellent core of black fruit, lovely soil signature, ripe,

seamless tannins and a very long, poised and complex finish. This is outstanding wine. 2025-2065+. **92+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The 2017 les Chaumes was the only wine in the cellar that seemed ready for its racking, as there was just a whisper of VA on the nose when the wine was first poured, but this vanished with a bit of swirling. The bouquet eventually is pure and expressive, offering up scents of black cherries, black raspberries, dark chocolate, gamebird, dark soil tones and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already quite suave on the attack, with a good core of fruit, fine complexity and grip, tangy acids and a long, suavely-tannic and very precise finish. A lovely example of Chaumes. 2023-2060+. **92**.



The premier cru vineyard of les Chaumes, flush up against Domaine Georges Noëllat.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The 2017 Nuits “aux Cras” from the domaine is also outstanding. The bouquet is pure, refined and beautifully transparent out of the blocks, delivering scents of black plums, black raspberries, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a superb base of soil and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully pure on the attack, with good sappiness at the core, impressive transparency, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. First class Cras! 2025-2065+. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Boudots”- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The 2017 Boudots from Domaine Noëllat is also outstanding. The wine is deep, pure and very nicely new oaky out of the blocks, offering up a black fruity mix of cassis black plums, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, *pigeon* and cedary new wood. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure on the attack and beautifully sappy at the core, with excellent focus and grip, excellent backend soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, youthful and very promising finish. This is a step behind the Cras in terms of absorbing its new wood, but it has plenty of stuffing to do the job well and this is going to be a beautiful example of Boudots. 2026-2065. **92+**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

The 2017 Feusselottes from Maxime Cheurlin was showing very nicely at the time of my visit, but was in an easy-going and laid back stylistic frame of mind and seemed to have been made from more generous yields in this vintage than was the case with wines from the domaine’s own parcels. This is, of course, perfectly understandable, as Monsieur Cheurlin buys these grapes and the *vigneron* who owns the parcel was almost completely wiped out by frosts here in 2016. In any case, the wine is still very lovely and complex, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, chocolate and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already very suave on the attack, with a respectable core, fine soil signature, just a touch of tannin and a long, complex and wide open finish. This is very tasty and will drink well from a fairly early age, but it does not have quite the same mid-palate conviction as the domaine bottlings this year. 2021-2055+. **91**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The Domaine Noëllat 2017 Petits Monts is a beautiful wine that perfectly captures the utterly refined and elegant side of this superb premier cru. The bouquet is bright and complex, jumping from the glass in a blaze of black raspberries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, espresso and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, suave and beautifully transparent, with a sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, complex and vibrant finish. This was raised in sixty percent new oak this year and is very reminiscent of Véronique Drouhin’s example of Petits Monts, which is the gold standard for this *terroir*. 2022-2065. **93**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée “les Beaux Monts”- Domaine Georges Noëllat

Maxime Cheurlin’s 2017 Beaux Monts is also an outstanding wine in the making, but a bit more reserved in profile out of the blocks than the Petits Monts. Surprisingly, Monsieur Cheurlin used all new oak for the *elevage* of this wine in 2017, but the integration of new oak here is seamless and I would have guessed that this was raised in the same percentage as the Petits Monts if not told differently. The bouquet is still fairly primary, but shows enormous potential in its blend of cassis, black raspberries, venison, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, ripe tannins, impeccable balance and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. Fine, fine juice. 2027-2065+. **93**.

2017 Clos Vougeot- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

The new Clos Vougeot from Maxime Cheurlin is an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is quite black fruity in profile, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, raw cocoa, roasted game, a fine base of soil tones and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a superb core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe tannins and lovely balance and grip on the focused, pure and long finish. This is a first class

example of Clos Vougeot and only needs some time in the cellar to blossom properly. 2027-2075. **93.**

2017 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The 2017 Echézeaux from Domaine Georges Noëllat is another excellent wine in the making. The wine offers up a fine aromatic constellation of black cherries, black plums, a fine base of dark soil tones, venison, woodsmoke and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully sappy at the core, with suave tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, velvety and classy finish. This was pretty badly frosted in 2016 and perhaps is a bit easy-going structurally this year, due to last year's frosts. But, it may well be that there is a more serious structural chassis here currently buried under the gorgeous fruit and it may firm up a bit more when Maxime racks the wine. If this is the case, then my score will prove to be conservative. 2027-2075+. **94.**

2017 Grands Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Noëllat

The domaine's 2017 Grands Echézeaux is outstanding and shows off a bit more chassis out of the blocks than the very seductive Echézeaux. The bouquet is a fine, black fruity blend of black plums, black raspberries, bitter chocolate, venison, Vosne spices, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with excellent grip and balance, lovely nascent complexity, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and very promising finish. This is top flight Grands Echézeaux! 2027-2075+. **95+.**

2017 Meursault "les Cras"- Maxime Cheurlin-Noëllat

Maxime's 2017 Meursault "les Cras" has turned out beautifully as well this year. The bouquet is ripe and very pretty in its slightly exotic blend of pear, a touch of mango, chalky soil tones, almonds, chalky soil tones, orange blossoms, vanillin oak and a nice touch of muskiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and juicy, with a fine core of fruit, lovely focus and balance and a long, zesty and complex finish. Fine juice that will drink with generosity and style right from release. 2018-2040. **91.**

Nuits St. Georges

Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils (Nuits St. Georges)

Bertrand Chevillon has been on a roll for more than a decade and his 2017s are yet again another absolutely stellar lineup of beautiful red Burgundies. It seems that in recent times, no matter what the highest potential of a given vintage happens to be, Monsieur Chevillon finds a way to realize it and his stunning 2017s are as fine a group of wines as one will find in any cellar in the Côte d'Or. The Chevillon team began harvesting on September 5th in 2017 and the malos were quite normal in their timing this year, so that the cellar was racked at its customary time at the end of April of 2018. Consequently, everything in the portfolio was in fine, fine form come mid-November and the wines were absolutely singing at the time of my visit. As there have been so many outstanding vintages chez Chevillon in the new millennium that it will be hard to figure out where to rank the 2017s, but these are truly beautiful wines in the making, synthesizing the gloriously pure and sappy fruit of the vintage with absolutely pristine expressions of terroir and fine, sophisticated structures to repay fairly long-term aging. Each and every premier cru in the cellars here this year shouts out its vineyard origin, and yet the wines are also endowed with some of the most beautiful, sappy fruit tones one can imagine in a group of young wines from Nuits St. Georges. If the combination sounds exciting, it is! Only a couple of wines in the cellar, the Vaucrains and the Pruliers, seemed slightly out of character this year, but that was because they were already showing such refinement at an early age, as

usually these two crus in particular need time in the bottle to show their inherent elegance, and it is a rare and special vintage when this character is on display while the wines are still in barrel!

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2017 old vine bottling of Nuits AC is outstanding *chez* Chevillon, offering up an expressive and very pure bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, a superb base of dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and nicely sappy at the core, with a soil-driven personality, ripe tannins and excellent focus and grip on the poised, complex and perfectly balanced finish. A superb *villages* in the making! 2023-2055. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The Chaignots is always the most extroverted premier cru in the Chevillon cellars and the style of the 2017 vintage dovetails perfectly with this cru. The bouquet is deep, pure and sappy, jumping from the glass in a fine blend of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, a touch of *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very refined and sappy, with lovely soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, very precise and absolutely seductive finish. This is one of the best recent vintages for the Chevillon Chaignots that I can recall! 2023-2060+. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Bousselots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The Domaine Chevillon Bousselots does not usually match the early appeal of the Chaignots in the cellars, but the style of the 2017 vintage has worked its charms here as well and this wine is showing beautifully out of the blocks. The bouquet is utterly refined, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a hint of the black truffles to come and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, quite sappy at the core, with ripe, beautifully integrated tannins, excellent focus and grip, impressive soil signature and a very long, refined and promising finish. Another marvelous premier cru in the making. 2025-2060+. **92**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Roncières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

In recent times I have been starting to come around to the conclusion that the Roncières is the most underrated premier cru in the stellar lineup from Domaine Chevillon, as this wine ages beautifully each and every year and turns into one of the most elegant examples of Nuits St. Georges to be found in all the Côte d’Or. The 2017 Roncières is indeed exceptional, and this too may be one of the very finest recent vintages of this bottling, as it offers up a stunning aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird, vanillin oak and a nice touch of rose petal in the upper register. On the palate the wine is very pure, very refined and full-bodied, with the vintage’s telltale sappiness on the display in the mid-palate, great focus and grip, suave tannins and a very, very long, complex and utterly refined finish. Do not overlook the 2017 Roncières *chez* Chevillon, as this wine is great! 2026-2065. **93+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

It is such an embarrassment of riches in the Chevillon cellars in 2017! The Perrières is an absolutely classic example of this fine premier cru, offering up a red fruity nose of red plums, cherries, a touch of pomegranate, stony soil tones, *pigeon*, raw cocoa, roses and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with great backend mineral drive, fine focus and grip, ripe tannins and a very long, very refined and promising finish. Great juice. 2027-2065. **93+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Pruliers”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2017 Pruliers may be the only wine in the Chevillon cellars this year that is not a quintessential expression of its *terroir*, but I mean this in a good way, as this is normally the most black fruity premier cru in the lineup, but this year it is bursting with atypical red fruity charm and sappiness! The bouquet is beautiful and very, very polite for young Pruliers, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, dark soil tones, nutskin and a beautifully-measured base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and properly structured, with a superb core of fruit, lovely transparency, beautiful focus and grip and a very long, complex and ripely tannic finish. Another superb wine in the making. 2027-2065+. **93+**.



Bertrand Chevillon in his cellars in Nuits St. Georges.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2017 les Cailles from Bertrand Chevillon is a stunning wine in the making. The already quite beautiful bouquet delivers a superb and absolutely classic blend of cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a very complex base of minerality, gamebird, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and properly reserved out of the blocks, with a great core of sappy fruit, beautiful soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and great length and grip on the focused, perfectly balanced and oh, so promising finish. All this great wine needs is time in the cellar to fully blossom! 2028-2065+. **94+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Les St. Georges is often the most purely black fruity wine in the Chevillon lineup, but in 2017, it has caught the red fruity fever that has swept through the other wines here and is gorgeously loaded with aromatics from the red side of the spectrum. The stunning bouquet soars from the glass in a sophisticated blend of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, a touch of nutskin, very, very complex minerality, peonies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and youthfully reserved, with plenty of sap down at the core, great soil signature, fine-grained tannins, laser-like focus and a very, very long, complex and utterly seamless finish. Brilliant juice. 2030-2075+. **96.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2017 Domaine Chevillon Vaucrains is deep, pure and supremely elegant out of the blocks this year, with the nose offering up a gorgeous aromatic blend of black cherries, pomegranate, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, complex soil tones, a hint of nutskin and a bit of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, full-bodied and the most reserved wine in the cellars today, with a rock solid core of fruit, exceptional transparency, ripe, perfectly integrated tannins and superb focus and grip on the very, very long and promising finish. The wine turns nicely sappy on the backend and shows off some of its future greatness. 2030-2075+. **96.**

Domaine Henri Gouges (Nuits St. Georges)

The Gouges family has once again squeezed out every ounce of potential inherent in the vintage of 2017 and this is another absolutely stellar range of wines from the domaine this year. The domaine's team was out in the vines on September 7th in 2017 and brought the grapes in with some alacrity, looking to conserve precision and mineral expression in the wines in the wake of the heat spike of late August. Grégory Gouges was very happy with how the 2017s are turning out, and with the malos not particularly late for the 2017s, many of the wines that can be rather hunkered down at this time of year were very expressive and quite happy to show their wares. The Nuits St. Georges villages had already been bottled, as Grégory wanted to preserve its absolutely charming fruit profile, and the premier cru of Chaines Carteaux had been bottled at the same time, which was a week prior to my visit. Amongst the other premier crus, the Chaignots had already been assembled in tank for bottling sometime early in the new year and the Vaucrains had been racked that morning, so we did not taste the it, but the sample of the Chaignots was bouncing back nicely and its ultimate quality was quite easy to read. With the remaining premier crus, everything else on the red wine side of the ledger was still in barrel and due for a racking over the coming several weeks and showed outstanding potential. I had a chance to taste the two white wines here this year as well, which are often just bottled and not ready for tasting, but this year they had been in bottle for a few months and were really showing well. The 2017 vintage is clearly a great vintage for the Gouges family and these wines will make cellar treasures for those adroit enough to search out some bottles and let them lie in the cellar for enough time for them to truly start to blossom.

2017 Bourgogne- Domaine Henri Gouges

The domaine's 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* was still in cask at the time of my visit and was showing lovely potential. The bouquet delivers a juicy blend of black cherries, cassis, dark chocolate, woodsmoke and a fine base of Nuits soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-

bodied and quite open for inspection today, with a good core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, a bit of backend tannin and a long, impressively complex and soil-driven finish. 2018-2030+. **89.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Nuits AC *chez* Gouges was showing pretty nicely for only having been in bottle for one week, and it will probably close down a bit as it gets a bit more distance out from the *mise*. The nose was obviously a bit reserved after the bottling, but with some coaxing shows a fine mix of dark berries, black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, French roast, an excellent base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice in the making. 2023-2060+. **90+.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Chaignots from the Gouges family was in fine shape for tasting, despite having been racked into tank the week before my visit. This is clearly going to be an excellent vintage for this bottling, as the nose delivers a fine constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, venison, a lovely base of soil tones, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a lovely core of sappy fruit, excellent soil tones, ripe, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and beautifully balanced finish. 2026-2065+. **92.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Chaines Carteaux”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Chaines Carteaux from Domaine Gouges was showing even better than the Nuits *villages*, despite it having been bottled at the same time. This is a very strong vintage for this premier cru, which was not bottled on its own last year, as the frost damage took away so much production for the popular Nuits AC that it had to be used to stretch the *villages* in 2016. Happily, the 2017 is again on its own and showed very well, delivering a fine aromatic blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, a superb base of soil, a nice touch of spice elements, nutskin, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, classy finish. 2024-2060. **92.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Porrets”- Domaine Henri Gouges

These last three premier crus in the Gouges cellars were still in barrel and showing marvelously. The 2017 Clos des Porrets is going to be a classic example of this fine *terroir*, with the bouquet offering up scents of roasted red and black cherries, a touch of new leather, woodsmoke, a very complex base of soil, grilled venison. Bitter chocolate, a hint of chicory and a deft framing of vanillin oak. This is by far the most structured and masculine premier cru in the cellar, up to this point. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a very solid core of fruit, a proper sense of youthful reserve, ripe tannins and a very long, very well-balanced and soil-driven finish. This is excellent and will need fully a decade (or perhaps a bit longer) to blossom and start to stir. It is a dynamite Nuits in the making! 2027-2075. **94.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Domaine Gouges Pruliers has a lovely sappiness to its personality on both the nose and palate, but is still a quite reserved and structured young wine (as one would expect from this *terroir* at this domaine!) and the wine has enormous potential. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of black cherries, black raspberries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, an excellent base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and an incipient note of cola in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and again, quite rock solid at the core, with its full-bodied format

supporting ripe, seamless tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the long, youthfully complex and perfectly balanced finish. Just add time! 2028-2075. **94.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Les St. Georges from the Gouges family is a brilliant young wine in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a youthfully complex constellation of sweet dark berries, black plums, a touch of cherry, *pigeon*, a beautiful base of dark soil tones, cigar ash, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very refined in profile, with a sappy core of fruit, excellent transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, impeccably balanced finish. The sense of mid-palate sappiness here is lurking, like the sun behind a cloud that is just about to break, and once this comes to the fore, the 2017 Les St. Georges is going to be one of the best recent vintages of this great wine produced by the Gouges family in a long time. 2028-2075. **96.**

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Gouges family’s 2017 Bourgogne blanc was bottled at the start of September and was really singing by the time of my visit. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, white peach, salty soil tones, beeswax, white flowers, a whisper of vanillin oak and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and racy, with a good core and lovely bounce and grip on the long finish. This is not chardonnay, but also Pinot Blanc *Gouges* from cuttings taken from the Perrières vineyard. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” Blanc- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2017 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” Blanc from Domaine Gouges was also showing beautifully in November. The bouquet is flat out superb, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of apple, fresh almond, white flowers, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, orange peel and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, great backend mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and stunning length and grip on the poised, vibrant and youthful finish. Great juice. 2020-2045. **92+.**

Domaine Alain Michelot (Nuits St. Georges)

Elodie Michelot and her team began picking in 2017 on September the 7th. She reported that the malolactic fermentations in this vintage were pretty prompt, with everything finishing up by the end of March of 2017, and the Michelot family was in the midst of starting to rack at the time of my visit on the 8th of November. As I have written in the past, when the malos are later in a given vintage, the particularly cold cellars chez Michelot can make the wines a bit ornery to taste in November, but they were on pretty good behavior this year and it is very clear that this is another truly outstanding vintage at Domaine Michelot. One or two of the wines were a touch reductive, but for the most part, they were singing and it was very easy and very pleasurable to work through the casks this year. Tasting through the lineup of 2017s chez Michelot underscored just how brilliant the vintage can be where vigneronnes made all the right decisions and were able to harness the full potential of the vintage, as this is most certainly the case with Elodie’s beautiful range of 2017s. The wines have great sappy purity to their fruit components, coupled with outstanding typicité and soil signature, ripe chassis of tannins and excellent length and grip on the finishes. Each and every wine here is a quintessential expression of its underlying terroir, and yet, it is hard not to get swept away solely by the beauty of the fruit expressions, as these wines are utterly charming in their properly structured, but already quite elegant stages of evolution. Despite Nuits St. Georges getting hit hard by frost damage in 2016, there is nothing in

any of the 2017s from Domaine Michelot that suggests generous yields from pent up energy from the year before in the vines. These are deep, sappy and soil-driven wines of very refined structures and they will age long and gracefully, though the style of the vintage may well make them accessible a bit earlier than is customary chez Michelot. Elodie Michelot finds the concept of “superstar winemaker” completely anathema to what a serious vigneronne should be doing with their gift of vines in this blessed region of great terroir, so we will not use that term for her (and stay in her good graces!), but if you have not yet taken the time to discover just how good her wines are these days, then the 2017 vintage is the perfect vintage in which to do so, as there are some absolutely magical wines waiting in the wings here!



Elodie Michelot in her cellars in Nuits St. Georges, after sharing a stunning range of her 2017s.

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from the Michelot family was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up scents of red and black cherries, a touch of nutskin, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, focused and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good core of fruit and a bit of backend tannin adding grip to the long finish. Good juice that will drink well right from the outset. 2018-2035. **88.**

2017 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Alain Michelot

As there was no frost in Morey in 2016, 2017 here is a beautiful window into how the vintage unfolded in communes unencumbered by the pent up energy of vines that were frost

damaged the year before. Tasting the Michelots' Morey AC, it is clear that 2017 is a supremely elegant vintage in its purest form, as this wine offers up a beautiful, red fruity bouquet of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and gamebird. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and beautifully transparent in personality, with a lovely core, modest tannins and a long, vibrant and very well balanced finish. A very stylish AC in the making. 2022-2055. **90+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges "Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Nuits St. Georges "Vieilles Vignes" from Domaine Alain Michelot is another excellent wine in the making, offering up a fine synthesis of sappy fruit and great purity. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, gamebird, dark chocolate, superb minerality and a topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant in profile for a young Nuits, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature, excellent focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, classy and nascently complex finish. 2023-2055+. **90+**.

2017 Morey St. Denis "les Charrières"- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Morey St. Denis "les Charrières" from Elodie Michelot was a bit reduced at the time of my visit, but with a bit of coaxing, blossomed nicely to reveal a black fruity nose of blackberries, black cherries, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, violets and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with excellent length and grip, ripe tannins and a focused and promising finish. Elodie notes that this was the last wine to finish its malo at the end of March and so the wine is a bit behind in its evolution in cask as a result. Still, it is easy to see that this will be quite good. 2025-2065. **91-92**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges "la Richemone"- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 la Richemone from Domaine Michelot was really singing at the time of my visit and was a beautiful blend of sappy and pure fruit and great soil signature. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of black cherries, plums, espresso, nutskin, a lovely spread of minerality, meaty tones and a nice touch of floral elements in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the poised, pure and vibrant finish. Just a lovely bottle of young Nuits St. Georges that is going to be very, very elegant when it is ready to drink. 2026-2060+. **92**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges "Champs Perdrix"- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Champs Perdrix is quite black fruity in personality this year, but also very pure and sappy as well. The nose delivers a fine combination of black cherries, sweet dark berries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a hint of nutskin and a very gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, quite sappy at the core, with lovely mineral drive, suave, ripe tannins and lovely balance on the long, nascently complex and lovely finish. Just add a bit of patience and *voila*, a superb bottle of Champs Perdrix! 2026-2060. **92+**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges "les Cailles"- Domaine Alain Michelot

I really like the style of the 2017 Michelot les Cailles out of the blocks this year, as the wine is a tad more reserved than either the la Richemone or Champs Perdrix, but not closed, just holding a bit back to reward the patient. The nose is pure and very classy, delivering scents of red and black cherries, sweet blackberries, nutskin, a complex base of minerality, woodsmoke, quail and a topnote of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very transparent in personality, with a great core of fruit, ripe tannins and a very long, very pure and very promising finish. This is excellent. 2027-2070. **93**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Chaignots *chez* Michelot was another wine that was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit. With a bit of prodding the nose offers up scents of sweet black fruit, dark soil tones, espresso, woodsmoke and venison. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with plenty of sappy fruit at the core, very good soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and well-balanced finish. It is funny, as Chaignots is often far more open at this stage than les Cailles, but in the Michelot cellars this November, the inverse was the case! This will certainly be very good. 2025-2060+. **92-93.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The inherent elegance of the 2017 vintage is very much in evidence in this beautiful young Vaucrains! The bouquet is pure and very, very refined already, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of sappy red and black cherries, gamebird, nutskin, a complex base of dark soil tones, raw cocoa, nutskin and a smoky topnote redolent of bonfires. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and both soil-driven and beautifully sappy, with suave, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and outstanding focus and grip on the very long and very classy finish. 2027-2065+. **94.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 vintage of Les St. Georges from Elodie Michelot is one of the finest young vintages of this wine I have ever tasted here. The bouquet is pure, sappy and stunningly transparent in composition, delivering a superb blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, a very complex base of minerality, violets, a beautiful touch of baking spices, just a whisper of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy, with marvelous transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. Great, great juice. 2028-2070. **94+.**

2017 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Michelot is another stellar bottle in the making. The nose was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but with swirling, this blows easily off to reveal a superb aromatic constellation of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a fine base of soil elements, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and sappy at the core, with outstanding soil signature, suave tannins and a very long, youthful and complex finish. This bottling is right up there at the very top of my list in Clos Vougeot alongside of the Mugneret sisters and the Hudelot-Noëllat version! 2029-2080. **95.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges “la Perrière Noblot” Blanc- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2017 Nuits St. Georges “la Perrière Noblot” Blanc from Domaine Alain Michelot was bottled in early September of 2018 and had bounced back nicely with a couple of months recovery time from the *mise*. The bouquet is quite lovely, offering up a vibrant blend of apple, sweet quince, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, lemon zest and a touch of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already silky on the attack, with a good core, sound framing acids and a long, open, complex and succulent finish. I really like the bounce and vivacity this wine shows on the backend already. 2018-2035. **92.**

Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Camus-Bruchon (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Guillaume Camus has made another superb range of wines in the 2017 vintage. He has been on quite a hot streak these last several years and his 2017s beautifully capture the potential inherent in this excellent vintage. Guillaume and his team began picking on September 7th in

2017. The malos were quite correct in their completion during the spring and the whole cellar was racked into tank for their assemblage in September, so that bottling could commence in December. As has been his custom now since the 2010 vintage, Guillaume has used about thirty percent whole clusters for most wines, and he was quite content with the quality of his stems in 2017 and used his typical percentage. He has begun to use more five hundred liter barrels in the cellars, as he really likes the larger volume casks (and their less marking of the wine with oaky flavors) for several of his cuvées. Both of his old vine bottlings of Savigny AC- Pimentiers and Grands Liards- were raised one-third in this larger casks to great success. One can imagine that one day down the road, everything chez Camus will be raised in these larger casks. Guillaume generally makes some of the most elegant wines in the village of Savigny, and his range is particularly noteworthy for their elegance in 2017, as there are no rough edges in any of the young wines (which is not always the case with youthful Savignys)!



Guillaume Camus in his tasting room, generously and delicately serving a bottle of 1978 les Lavières.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc “les Goudelettes”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc “les Goudelettes” from Camus-Bruchon is a very pretty wine. The bright and expressive bouquet offers up scents of lemon, pear, stony minerality, white flowers and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and juicy at the core, with crisp acids, fine focus and grip and a long, balanced and wide open finish. Good juice. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Bourgogne rouge is a good bottle in the making *chez* Camus. The bouquet is a mix of cherries, red plums, violets, a nice touch of chalky soil and a topnote of *pigeon*. On the palate the wine is fullish, focused and nicely plump at the core, with a nice touch of soil, very pretty fruit tones and a wisp of backend tannin perking up the long and tasty finish. This could do with a few years in the cellar to blossom properly and will be a very good example. 2021-2040. **88.**

2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “le Grand Soussy”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume Camus’ 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “le Grand Soussy” has turned out beautifully and is going to drink very well right from the outset, but has the requisite balance to also age nicely for at least a couple of decades. The nose wafts from the glass in a very stylish blend of red plums, cherries, a touch of raw cocoa, gamebird, a nice touch of spice and a lovely topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and juicy in the mid-palate, with fine shape and bounce, just a whisper of backend tannin and a long and succulent finish. Good juice and a fine value. 2018-2038. **89.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Cuvée Reine Joly”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Cuvée Reine Joly is really a lovely bottle of Savigny *villages*, offering up a bright and refined bouquet of red and black cherries, gamebird, Savigny spice tones, raw cocoa, a lovely base of soil and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely transparent, with lovely bounce and grip, a solid core and just a bit of backend tannin perking up the long finish. 2021-2045. **90.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Pimentiers” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume Camus’ 2017 Pimentiers is lovely a wine in the making, with the inherent elegance of the vintage quite in evidence in the nose of sweet red currants, cherries, red plums, a nice touch of spice, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a bit of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite a bit more structured than the Cuvée Reine Joly, with ripe, fine-grained tannins, a fine core of fruit and excellent length and grip on the well balanced finish. This will need five or six years to blossom, and will be excellent once it is ready to start drinking. 2023-2060. **91.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Grands Liards” V. V.- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Grand Liards from Camus-Bruchon is excellent as well and was showing a bit more mid-palate sappiness at this stage than the Pimentiers. The first class nose jumps from the glass in a fine mix of red plums, cherries, a touch of wild strawberry, stony minerality, woodsmoke, a bit of new wood and a lovely topnote of Savigny spice elements. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and excellent grip on the poised, focused and nicely balanced long finish. This is premier cru quality without a doubt and a fine value! 2024-2060. **91+.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Gravains”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Gravains from Monsieur Camus was raised in fifty percent new oak this year, which is higher than normal for this bottling, but all of the new wood was the aforementioned five hundred liter barrels, so the impression of oakiness in the wine is as it always is with the smaller percentage of new 228 liter casks in past vintages. Guillaume noted this year that Gravains has a very strong vein of limestone in it and the soils are very similar to those in Corton-Charlemagne, which is the primary reason many *vignerons* with parcels here have them planted to chardonnay. The 2017 *rouge* from Guillaume is excellent, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, a complex base of chalky soil, woodsmoke, Savigny

spice tones and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more reserved in profile than the old vine *villages* bottlings, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent backend mineral drive, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. This will be lovely. 2025-2065. **92+**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 les Lavières from Domaine Camus-Bruchon is absolutely superb and one of the most elegant wines produced in the village this year. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up a scents of red and black cherries, red plums, violets, a touch of cocoa powder, nutskin, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and Savigny spices. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with a lovely, sappy core of fruit, beautiful soil inflection, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish that closes with impressive lift and bounce. 2025-2065. **93**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Narbantons” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Narbantons from Monsieur Camus was raised in about thirty-five percent new oak, as there is one, new, six hundred liter cask, five older barrels and one new barrel utilized in the cuvée. The wine has turned out beautifully, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of pomegranate, red and black cherries, lovely spice tones, dark soil, bonfire, venison, vanillin oak and a touch of orange peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full, sappy and superbly focused, with lovely backend mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the poised and nascently complex finish. An excellent Narbantons in the making. 2026-2065+. **93**.

2017 Beaune “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Camus-Bruchon Clos du Roi was also showing excellent potential at the time of my visit. The nose is deep and classic, offering up scents of red and black cherries, a nice touch of meatiness, bonfire, a fine base of soil, raw cocoa and a nice touch of upper register spiciness from the thirty percent whole clusters. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in profile, with a fine core of fruit, good transparency and impressive length and grip on the suavely tannic and impeccably balanced finish. A lovely Beaune. 2023-2060. **92**.

2017 Pommard “Clos des Arvelets”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2017 Clos des Arvelets from Guillaume Camus is also an outstanding young wine, with the vintage’s inherent elegance once again adding a lovely polish to this young Pommard. The nose wafts from the glass in a complex mix of red plum, pomegranate, cherries, chalky soil tones, gamebird, raw cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, rock solid at the core and very elegant in profile, with excellent focus and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, poised and complex finish. Superb juice. 2026-2065+. **93+**.

Domaine Chandon de Briailles (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Claude and François de Nicolay have made a lovely range of 2017s. Their vineyards were some of the hardest hit by frost in 2016, with the exception of their grand crus, which were not particularly frosted, so there was plenty of room for good cheer when the village of Savigny was able to avoid frost damage in late April of 2017 and a normal crop size was in the offing. The de Nicolay family are very much purists when it comes to their farming and its harmony with nature, and beyond their strict approach to biodynamic viticulture, this also extends philosophically to the style and shape of each growing season, so that they tend to be very philosophical when Mother Nature deals a raw hand to vignerons in Savigny-lès-Beaune, which seems to have happened with rather alarming frequency over the last decade. Claude de Nicolay noted that this approach was also taken in 2017, so the domaine made no efforts to do a green

harvest in the vineyards that were severely frosted the year before, being content to take what nature decided to give them in crop size this year. Consequently, the 2017s at Chandon de Briailles vary a bit stylistically from wine to wine this year, partially dependent upon how badly the vineyard was frost damaged in 2016. Those which were the most severely frosted last year seem to have produced wines that are very suave, pretty and will be accessible early, but not overly structured, and will make very good youthful drinking. Those that escaped the brunt of the cold last year (or are planted to the oldest vines and have much less natural vigor to squirrel away in a frost year for the following year's crop) have turned out deeper and more structured in 2017, and these are my favorite wines in the cellar this year. The domaine's team was out in the vines at the end of August of 2017 to start picking the white grapes, and the red wine vineyards were all harvested between September 7th and 17th. Claude observed that the malos were mostly completed by spring time, but there were a few outliers who did not complete their malos until June (such as Fourneaux, les Vergelesses and Bressandes), so the cellar was in varying stages of elevage at the time of my mid-November visit. A couple of the reds and whites had already been bottled, others had been assembled in tank for the winter for bottling in the early spring, and others were still in barrel (those with the latest malos) and had not yet been racked. While not every wine was in the same stage of its development, they generally all showed very well indeed and it is quite clear that this is a top flight vintage from this fine Savigny estate. The de Nicolays have been interested in the natural wine movement for several years now, and have dabbled on occasion with certain aspects of this creed. In 2017, the experimental vineyards was les Lavières, as they have produced both a "no sulfur added" bottling and a traditional cuvée with a modest level of SO₂ added at bottling. I had the pleasure to taste the two of them back to back and came away thinking that the non-sulfur bottling has turned out pretty well, but that it was really rather a waste of bunches from my favorite Savigny premier cru terroir in the cellars, as the SO₂-added bottling was both more complex and more structurally emphatic, and will make the better wine and have a far longer life in bottle. Of course, if one does not try the experiment, all one is left with is the intuition that one way or the other will be superior.

Vins Blancs

2017 Pernand-Vergelesses "Îles de Vergelesses" Blanc - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Claude and François de Nicolay have purchased a six hundred liter *foudre* made by the fine Austrian *tonnelier*, Stockinger, to raise their Îles de Vergelesses Blanc in and Claude is very, very pleased with how this inaugural vintage in Stockinger has turned out. The malo was very late finishing here, but the wine was still in *foudre* and showing very well, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of peach, hazelnuts, tangerine, a fine base of soil tones and hints of *crème patissière* in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, good framing acids, very good focus and grip and a long, wide open and succulent finish. This will be a charmer right from the outset. 2018-2040. **92.**

2017 Corton Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 Corton Blanc also had a late malo completion and, consequently, was still in barrel at the time of my visit and had not yet been racked. The wine is beautifully expressive on the nose, offering up a refined mix of apple, pear, orange blossoms, chalky soil tones, *crème patissière* and a nice touch of salinity in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and quite deep at the core, with sound acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This is not quite as open for business as the Îles de Vergelesses Blanc, but it is not

going to demand too much patience before it too is drinking with great breed and generosity. 2021-2045. 93.



Claude de Nicolay, surrounded by family; to her right is her son, Oscar, and to her left is her cousin.

Vins Rouges

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune *villages* from Chandon de Briailles was one hundred percent de-stemmed this year (as has been the case for this cuvée since the 2014 vintage). The wine was bottled at the end of September of 2018 and was nicely recovered at the time of my visit, offering up a vibrant bouquet of red and black cherries, red currants, gamebird, iron-infused soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of orange peel in the upper register. With a bit of time in the glass, there are plenty of Savigny spices also present in the aromatic profile. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and nicely soil-driven, with a fine core and just a touch of backend tannin on the long and stylish finish. This will drink nicely from a fairly early age and is a classy AC. 2023-2055. 90.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Fourneaux”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The de Nicolays’ vines in Fourneaux are a good age, at sixty-two years-old, so they were probably not all that vigorous in 2017 after the severe frost damage the year before. The wine included ten percent whole clusters in 2017 and has turned out very nicely, albeit showing quite forward at the time of my visit. The bouquet offers up a classic blend of cherries, red currants, a

touch of meatiness, again, iron-infused soil elements, bonfire, Savigny spices and just a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a pretty core of red fruit, modest tannins and a long, well-balanced and potentially silky finish. Good juice, but this will be a fairly forward year for les Fourneaux. 2025-2060. **90+**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles (sans soufre)

The non-sulfured 2017 les Lavières is a good, solid wine, but it already seems to lack a bit of freshness and punch to my palate. This cuvée was bottled in July, whereas the sulfured version was bottled at the end of September. The *sans soufre* offers up a complex nose of black cherries, a hint of tomato, gamebird, woodsmoke, a good base of soil and a spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and suavely-tannic, with a solid core and good length and grip on the slightly flat finish. This is not bad, but the regular version is a slight step ahead of it and also shows all signs of lasting twenty years longer in bottle. 2022-2040. **90**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 “regular bottling” of les Lavières is fresher on the nose than the *sans soufre*, offering up a vibrant blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, lovely spices and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a good core, still a bit more reserved after its recent *mise* than the *sans soufre* version, with a good core, silky tannins and good lift and grip on the long and vibrant finish. This is not longer or deeper than the above, but it has more bounce and structural conviction and is the superior bottle to my tastes. 2024-2060. **91+**.

2017 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses” - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

As I noted in the introduction, the les Vergelesses was one of the last wines to finish up its malo this year, so it was still in barrel and had not yet been racked. The bouquet is pure, but still fairly reserved in personality, reluctantly offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, roasted game, fresh herb tones, coffee and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly structured, with a rock solid core, chewy tannins and very good length and grip on the still quite adolescent finish. This will need some time to blossom. 2026-2060. **91-92**.

2017 Pernand-Vergelesses “Îles de Vergelesses” - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 Îles de Vergelesses from Chandon de Briailles had been assembled in tank the week before my visit, but was showing pretty well and its ultimate quality was self-evident. The bouquet is outstanding, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of red and black cherries, orange peel, iron soil tones, *pigeon*, a bit of bonfire and a lovely, spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite classy, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe, fine-grained tannins and very fine length and grip on the well-balanced and complex finish. This has more stuffing and a superior structural chassis than any of the Savignys this year. 2024-2065+. **93**.

2017 Corton “Maréchaudes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 Maréchaudes from the di Nicolays had been bottled in mid-September and was still in the process of bouncing back from the *mise*, but its potential was quite easy to read. The nose is a fine blend of red and black cherries, venison, Corton spices tones, a lovely base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really shows off a beautiful core of pure fruit, with fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, nascently complex finish. This is still just a bit compact after its *mise*, but it is going to be excellent. 2025-2070. **93-94**.

2017 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Claude de Nicolay used eighty percent whole clusters for both the Bressandes and Clos du Roi in 2017. This was one of the late malo finishers and was still in cask and showing a touch of carbon dioxide on the palate. The nose was in perfect form and really refined, offering up scents of red and black cherries, venison, bonfire, coffee, a very complex base of soil, mustard seed and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, soil-driven and sports just beautiful mid-palate depth, with impeccable balance, impressive focus and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very, very long, complex finish. A classic in the making. 2027-2070. **93-94+.**

2017 Corton “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2017 Chandon de Briailles Clos du Roi finished up its malo a bit ahead of the Bressandes, so this wine had been assembled into tank a few weeks prior to my visit and was showing very, very well. The nose is deep and very classy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, a touch of orange peel, gamebird, a beautifully complex base of minerality, Corton spices, coriander seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and utterly suave in profile, with excellent focus and grip, a sappy core, outstanding mineral drive and a very long, ripely tannic finish of impeccable balance and budding complexity. Great Corton on the making! 2027-2085. **95+.**

2017 Clos Vougeot- François de Nicolay

There are two barrels of Clos Vougeot in the cellars this year, made from purchased grapes by François de Nicolay. The wine was still in cask at the time of my visit and showing very well indeed, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of cherries, red plums, venison, a lovely base of soil, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off plenty of mid-palate depth, with fine focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, very well-balanced, nascently complex finish. Fine juice in the making. 2030-2085. **93.**

Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

The commune of Savigny-lès-Beaune has had some of the toughest meteorological luck (along with Volnay and Pommard) in the last eight years, so it was very nice to see the Pavelot family’s cellars properly full of casks of 2017s. Hugues Pavelot has not missed the opportunity to produce outstanding wines in this vintage and the entire range is excellent in quality, though like many cellars, there is a bit of a swing of styles between more structured cuvées for longer-term aging and immediately appealing bottlings that will seduce Burgundy lovers from very early on in their evolutionary cycles. Monsieur Pavelot started picking his white grapes on September 2nd in 2017 and his pinot noir parcels from the 6th of the month onwards. The vast majority of the Pavelot red wines had already been racked into tanks in anticipation of bottling early in the new year, as Monsieur Pavelot was very, very happy with their evolution in cask and did not wish to lose their beautiful sense of balance by extending their time in barrel. Amongst the red wines here, the villages level bottlings are extremely attractive right out of the blocks and will provide plenty of fine drinking in their youth, while the premier crus are a bit more properly reserved and will need a bit of time in the cellar to blossom fully. There is a new villages level bottling chez Pavelot in 2017, as Hugues now is producing a Volnay AC from purchased grapes. The wine showed very well and is a welcome new addition to the lineup of very good village wines at the domaine. When one steps up to the premier cru level of red wines chez Pavelot in 2017, the wines ratchet up their precision, mineral drive and structural integrity, so the very seductive and easy-going style of the village wines is replaced by nicely structured wines that will need some

time in the cellar to blossom, but which will share the same impressive elegance as their more forward village wine counterparts. I love the style of the 2017 Pavelot premier crus and think that this may well be the most complete vintage for the reds at this level here since the 2005 vintage- that is just how good these wines are! There were a couple of wines that I did not taste chez Pavelot this year that are normally part of the lineup- Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses”, Savigny “les Lavières” and Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” and I did not think to ask (or did so and did not write down the information!) if they were produced in 2017 and just not at a good moment for tasting, or if they had not been made in this vintage. But, what I did get to taste this year from Hugues Pavelot ranges from delicious to flat out brilliant!



Hugues Pavelot, posing with a photo of a previous generation of the family, in the domaine's tasting room.

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Pavelot is a fine example in the making, offering up a bright and expressive bouquet of cherries, a touch of dark berry, bonfire, chocolate and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bouncy and nicely plump at the core, with fine focus and balance and just a hint of backend tannin adding grip on the quite long finish. Good juice that will drink well from the outset. 2018-2030+. 87+.

2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Hugues Pavelot’s 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts” is another very pretty and wide open wine that will delight people from the get go. The bouquet is vibrant and nicely sappy, offering up scents of black cherries and plums, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil, *pigeon* and a nice touch of dark chocolate in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, succulent and wide open for business, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, easy-going tannins and a long, vibrant and delicious finish. This is a lovely bottle for near-term drinking and a fine value this year. 2018-2035+. **88+**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The domaine’s Chorey is made from purchased grapes, so one assumes that the severe frost damage there in 2016 led to a bit more generous eye towards yields in 2017, so it is not surprising that the 2017 Savigny AC (from the Pavelots’ own vines) is a step up in depth and grip than the very pretty Chorey. The bouquet there is really lovely, offering up a fine, bouquet of plums, red currants, gamebird, a fine array of Savigny spice tones, soil, a touch of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven in personality, with a very good core of fruit, modest tannins and a long, pure and classy finish. This is a superb bottle of *villages*. 2018-2045. **90**.

2017 Aloxe-Corton- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Aloxe *villages* from Hugues Pavelot is another fine example of the vintage. The nose is pure and sappy, wafting from the glass in a very attractive blend of red and black cherries, chocolate, dark soil tones, gamebird, fresh nutmeg and a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and already quite complex, with plenty of mid-palate sappiness, a fine signature of soil and gentle backend tannins adding grip and definition on the quite long finish. Lovely juice. 2018-2045. **90+**.

2017 Volnay- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Volnay AC is a very good example and, though not quite as forward as these other *villages* level bottlings, it will not demand too many years in the cellar before it too starts to drink with generosity. The complex nose offers up scents of plums, black cherries, chocolate, a lovely base of soil, *pigeon*, a touch of fresh thyme and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy, with very good complexity, nice soil tones and a long, moderately tannic and very well balanced finish. 2021-2045+. **90+**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Peuillets”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The step up in purity and precision from the very good Volnay *villages* to the les Peuillets is quite evident and this is going to be an excellent wine in every respect. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a focused and refined blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, Savigny spice tones, gamebird, a bit of bonfire, excellent underlying soil tones and a bit of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, seamless and full-bodied, with a superb core of fruit, lovely mineral drive, suave backend tannins and a very long, classy and nascently complex finish. When this is ready to drink, it is going to be a very elegant example of Peuillets. 2023-2065+. **92**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Serpentières” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The vineyard of Serpentières can sometimes provide wines that are a bit rugged out of the blocks, but this is emphatically not the case with the 2017 version from Hugues Pavelot, as this is already a very elegant young wine. The nose is terrific, offering up a combination of black cherries, black currants, venison, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil, discreet new oak and a classic Savigny spicebox in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure and full-bodied, but not quite as deep at the core as the Peuillets this year, with lovely transparency and

fruit purity, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This may well put on a bit more weight at the core prior to bottling, in which case it may nose out the lovely les Peuillets, but right now, the two wines are equivalent in quality and just a bit different in style, as the Serpentières is inherently a slightly more complex wine, but the Peuillets has a bit more mid-palate volume. 2023-2065+. **92.**

2017 Beaune “Bressandes”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Beaune “Bressandes” from Domaine Pavelot is another lovely bottle in the making, but it is not quite as elegant in personality this year as the superb range of Savigny premier crus. The bouquet is deep and nicely ripe, offering up scents of black cherries, cassis, venison, chocolate, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate this is a pretty big wine by the standards of the vintage, with a plush attack, a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, complex and succulent finish. This is a bit more fruit-driven in style than the Savignys and I would guess that this was one of the last vineyards to be picked this year. It is still a lovely wine and will make friends early on, but the Savigny premier crus are a step up in seriousness this year. 2021-2055. **91.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 version of aux Guettes from Hugues Pavelot is an utterly classic expression of this fine *terroir*. The first class bouquet is pure and already impressively complex, delivering scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, a lovely mix of spice tones, dark soil elements, a touch of mustard seed and a nicely discreet base of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, refined in profile and beautifully sappy at the core, with excellent complexity, ripe, seamless tannins and lovely backend mineral drive on the focused and perfectly balanced young finish. This is gorgeous wine. 2023-2060+. **93+.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Gravains”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 aux Gravains from Domaine Pavelot is another absolutely stellar young wine in the making. The aromatic constellation here is pure and elegant, wafting from the glass in a superb mix of red and black cherries, a touch of red currant, Savigny spices, raw cocoa, orange peel, gamebird, stony soil elements, cedar and a nice topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very transparent in profile, with sappy core of very pure fruit, great length and grip and a youthfully complex, vibrant and beautifully precise finish. This will need a bit of bottle age to really start to hit on all cylinders, but it is going to be stellar when it is ready to drink. 2024-2065. **94.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “la Dominode”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 la Dominode is the most structured young Savigny premier cru in the cellars, but its potential is enormous. The youthful nose was still in the process of absorbing its serving of new oak, but will do so seamlessly with a bit more age, and offers up a fine blend of black plums, red and black cherries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, raw cocoa, a bit of bonfire, cedar and an exotic topnote of licorice. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with an excellent core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, soil-driven and complex finish. This is serious juice. 2026-2065+. **94+.**

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The Bourgogne *blanc* made from purchased grapes from the Mâconnais remains in the Pavelot lineup in 2017, after making its debut last year. The wine had been assembled in tank and recently filtered, but not yet fined, at the time of my visit, but seemed to be in good shape for

tasting. The bouquet offers up scents of green apple, lime, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full and nicely racy in personality, with a nice signature of soil and a long, bouncy finish. Good, solid juice. 2018-2030. **87-88.**

2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “Clos Margot” Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune “Clos Margot” *blanc* from Domaine Pavelot is a pretty and quite wide open wine that will drink well from the moment it is released. The nose delivers a mix of apple, quince, chalky soil tones, citrus zest, just a hint of vanillin oak and a topnote of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent in personality, with sound framing acids, good focus and grip and a long, wide open and ready to go finish. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Saint Romain Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Saint Romain *blanc* from Hugues Pavelot is a touch more precise and complex on the nose than the Chorey *blanc* this year. The bouquet offers up a blend of apple, a touch of tangerine, citrus zest, a good base of limestone minerality, vanillin oak and a nice, esthery topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and already quite generous on the attack, with a good core, moderate acids and lovely focus and bounce on the long finish. This is fresh and complex, but a bit gently structured and it will be at its best in its youth. 2018-2030. **89+.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Savigny *blanc* from Domaine Pavelot is a step up in terms of cut, structural tension and complexity. The bouquet is nicely reserved in its mix of apple, lime, white flowers, a touch of menthol, beautiful chalky minerality and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the nascently complex and vibrant finish. This is really, really good. 2020-2040. **91+.**

2017 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2017 Pernand *blanc* is ripe, wide open and very generous already on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a ripe combination of pear, pineapple, a touch of honey, orange peel, chalk and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite fruit-driven in personality, with a plump core of fruit, sound framing acids and good length and grip on the succulent finish. This does not possess either the cut or distinction of the Savigny *blanc* this year, though it will be very tasty over the first decade or so it is in the bottle. 2018-2030. **89+.**

2017 Corton Blanc- Jean-Marc et Hugues Domaine Pavelot

The 2017 Corton *blanc* from Monsieur Pavelot is cut from the same cloth as the fine Savigny *blanc* in this vintage and this wine is going to be outstanding. The bouquet is pure, refined and already nicely complex, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of pear, apple, fresh almond, a touch of *crème patissière*, chalky minerality, spring flowers, lime zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a rock solid core, excellent cut and grip, zesty acids and a very long, vibrant and very promising finish. Fine juice. 2021-2045+. **93+.**

Beaune

Maison Joseph Drouhin (Beaune)

As one would expect, Maison Joseph Drouhin has fashioned an outstanding range of 2017s up and down their hierarchy of bottlings in this fine vintage. However, I did note some variation in style here between their purely négociant wines and those that are produced from estate vineyards, as some of the négociant wines were cut from that suave, open-knit and silky

style that will merit earlier drinking (with plenty of pleasure I might add), while the wines from the Drouhin family's own vineyards tended to be deeper, more structured and built more for the long haul. This is of course a generalization, as some wines made from purchased grapes (such as their Folatières and Clos de la Garenne) were racy, deep and classically structured, while others were more forward and sumptuous out of the blocks. At harvest time, the Drouhin picking teams often made multiple passes through each vineyard, as some sectors ripened at different times than in others, so for example, though they do not have a large parcel of grapes contracted for in Meursault "Charmes" (from a new grower the maison has just started working with and whom they are very excited about), the picking teams made three passes through the vineyard, picking each section of vines at optimal ripeness. In the Clos des Mouches, there were fully six passes through by the harvesters between September 1st and September 6th just to bring in each parcel of chardonnay in perfect condition! The Drouhins began picking on August 30th in 2017 in the premier cru vineyard of Clos de la Garenne and worked diligently to bring in the bunches in a prompt fashion to retain structure and mineral precision wherever possible. Véronique Drouhin-Boss, who hosted our November tasting, noted that they were very happy with the timing of their picking in 2017, which is exemplified by perfectly ripe stems and seeds in their red wine vineyards and she and the winemaking team here chose to use more whole clusters in 2017 than in several recent vintages. This was in contrast to many of their neighbors in this vintage and really shows that they were able to time their harvesting quite precisely this year.

As is always the case here in November, the wines were in varying stages of their evolutions, with some whites and lighter-bodied reds already bottled in the month or so preceding our tasting, while others had already been assembled in preparation for bottling in the coming several weeks, while others remained in cask. I have tried to note the stage of development of each wine in my tasting notes below. I have not included my notes on any of the Mâconnais or Côte Chalonnaise white wines from Maison Drouhin in this report, as I am also working on an article on these two regions for the January issue of the newsletter and will include the notes on those bottlings in that feature. However, I should mention that 2017 is a very strong vintage for the Drouhins in those two sectors of Burgundy as well and the wines were showing very well in Beaune in November and will offer lovely value. As has been the case for several vintages now, the Montagny Blanc bottling merits special attention for its excellent quality and very fair price. The red wines from the Côte Chalonnaise that we tasted in Beaune are included in the notes below, as I do not anticipate tasting a wide range of reds from there after the first of the year, so those notes are probably best off left with the 2017 Côte d'Or bottlings from Maison Drouhin.

Vins Blancs de Maison Drouhin

2017 Meursault- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Meursault AC is quite a classic example of the vintage, offering up plenty of depth and *terroir* in a forward and already very tasty format. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with a juicy core, sound framing acids and lovely length and bounce on the wide open and delicious finish. A fine *villages*. Bottled in early October. 2018-2035. **90.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Puligny *villages* from Joseph Drouhin is also very tasty in this vintage, offering up a ripe and bright bouquet of apple, peach, citrus zest, chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, open and drinking well already, with a good core and complexity, solid acidity and a long, juicy and quite bouncy finish. Again, this is quite forward in style, but has good soil signature to go along with its lovely fruit and will be a charmer from the moment it is released. Bottled in early October. 2018-2035. **90+**.



Véronique Drouhin-Boss discussing the 2017 vintage prior to the start of our tasting in November.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Chassagne AC was also bottled in early October and was really showing well in November. The bouquet is precise, pure and really shares some aromatic signature notes with the Marquis de Laguiche Morgeot this year, as it offers up a lovely blend of pear, apple, complex, chalky soil tones, a touch of *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and really has excellent depth at the core, with lovely cut and grip and a long, vibrant and zesty finish. This is the pick of the litter this year amongst three very good *villages* bottlings from the Côte de Beaune. 2018-2040+. **91+**.

2017 Meursault “Charmes”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

As I mentioned above, the Charmes comes from a new grower the estate has just started working with and everyone at Maison Drouhin is excited about the collaboration. The wine was

bottled at the very end of August of this year and was showing beautifully in November, wafting from the glass in a classic mix of apple, pear, passion fruit, chalky minerality, almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely reserved in personality, with a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and fine cut and grip on the long, precise and complex finish. Fine juice. 2021-2040+. **92.**

2017 Meursault “Genevrières”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Genevrières was another wine where the grapes were picked in two *tranches* in 2017, as the younger vines ripened quicker than the older vines here. Consequently, the teams were out here on both August 30th and again on September 6th, to bring in each parcel at proper ripeness. The wine was still in cask at the time of my visit and showing beautifully, offering up a pure and complex bouquet of apple, passion fruit, pear, salty minerality, apple blossoms, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and complex, with really impressive raciness and focus, a lovely core of fruit and a very long, refined and classic finish. In 2017, the Drouhins’ Genevrières was raised in twenty-five percent new oak. 2018-2045. **93.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Garenne”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

While the Folatières bottling is Maison Drouhin’s most famous premier cru in Puligny, their Clos de la Garenne is also consistently excellent (and hails from the same fine grower who farms their Folatières and whom the family has worked with for many decades). The 2017 Clos de la Garenne was still in barrel in November and showing beautifully, offering up a fine nose of white peach, apple, a touch of tangerine, chalky minerality, incipient notes of *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine soil signature, bright acids and a very long, poised and complex finish. A lovely example. 2021-2045. **92+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Embazées”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Embazées” from Maison Drouhin was bottled at the very end of August of 2018. The wine is ripe, complex and wide open in personality (perhaps reflecting a bit the differences between vineyards that were badly frosted in 2016, such as this, as opposed to the Clos de la Garenne, which was not touched by the frost of ’16), offering up a lovely nose of apple, white peach, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, a deft base of vanillin oak and a bit of almond in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and already very accessible, with respectable depth at the core, lovely balance and complexity and a long, vibrant and already very tasty finish. This does not have quite the same core and grip as the Clos de la Garenne, but it is drinking very nicely out of the blocks and will make friends early. 2018-2035. **90+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” Marquis de Laguiche- Joseph Drouhin

Obviously I have a soft spot for this beautiful bottling of Morgeot, as I wrote a feature on the Marquis de Laguiche bottling back in the spring. The 2017 version is flat out stunning and was one of the very best premier cru whites I tasted from the Côte de Beaune in November. The wine was still in cask in November and absolutely singing, as it delivers a beautiful aromatic constellation of pear, apple, orange zest, *crème patissière*, complex chalky soil elements, vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote redolent of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and racy, with a great core of fruit, stellar soil signature, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the very long, very pure and refined finish. Great juice. 2018-2045+. **94.**

2017 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Clos des Mouches Blanc is an absolute classic in the making. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex and pristine blend of apple, lemon, beeswax, chalky soil tones,

citrus peel, dried flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully reserved in personality, with a rock solid core, excellent structure and grip, bright, zesty acids and lovely focus and grip on the very long and youthful finish. This was still in cask in November and showing beautifully. It will be a long-lived, complex and very classy vintage of this iconic bottling *chez Drouhin*. 2021-2055+. **94.**

2017 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Joseph Drouhin (Estate)

The Drouhin family's own parcels of vines in this vineyard are located at the very summit of the slope, in the upper section of the *climat* of les Longuettes, which lies on the Aloxe-Pernand border. The 2017 was still in cask in November and is clearly one of the great recent vintages of Corton-Charlemagne from the maison. The bouquet offers up a pure and nicely reserved blend of pear, apple, fresh almond, chalky minerality, a touch of citrus zest and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure on the attack, with a rock solid core, great mineral drive and grip, bright, snappy acids and stunning balance and nascent complexity on the very, very long and energetic finish. This is a brilliant example of Corton Charlie. 2024-2065+. **96.**

2017 Montrachet “Marquis de Laguiche”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

As all of the vines for the Marquis de Laguiche Montrachet are on the Puligny side of the vineyard, the frost damage here in 2016 was less severe than was the case on the Chassagne side of this grand cru. Consequently, there was probably a bit less pent up energy here and the vigor was more easily harnessed in 2017. In any case, the 2017 vintage of the Marquis de Laguiche Montrachet is flat out brilliant, offering up a stunning bouquet of pear, apple, lemon, a hint of almond paste, complex, limestone minerality, *crème patissière*, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with superb nascent complexity, bright, vibrant acids and impeccable balance on the very, very long, racy and utterly classical finish. A brilliant example of Montrachet in the making. 2028-2060+. **97.**

Vins Rouges de Maison Drouhin

2017 Rully Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Rully *rouge* bottling from Maison Drouhin is produced primarily from the domaine's own vineyards, augmented by a bit of purchased fruit. This is a cuvée that has notably jumped in quality in the last half dozen vintages and the 2017 is really a good bottle and a great bargain. The red fruity nose wafts from the glass in a fine mix of cherries, a touch of blood orange, bonfire, iron-infused soil tones and a nice touch of stem spice in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and nicely mineral in personality, with a good dollop of sappiness at the core, quite modest tannins and lovely length and grip on the well balanced finish. This is still in cask. Good juice. 2018-2035+. **89.**

2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Chorey-lès-Beaune bottling from Maison Drouhin has been a real charmer virtually every year since I first started tasting it regularly in the 1999 vintage, but in 2017, the bad frost damage of 2016 can be felt in the slightly *fluide* core of this wine. The bouquet is still very pretty, offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, woodsmoke and a nice touch of soil. On the palate the wine is medium-full, focused and quite laid back structurally, with fine flavor precision, but not a lot of mid-palate depth this year. The finish is still long and already quite velvety, so this will be best drunk in the next decade or so. A tasty middleweight, but this usually

has quite a bit more stuffing. As the wine is still in barrel, maybe it will put on a bit more weight over the coming months. 2018-2030. **87.**

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Clos des Godeaux”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Clos des Godeaux bottling was not produced on its own last year, as the tiny production here in 2016 after the frost damage was consigned to try and make a bit bigger Savigny AC cuvée. In 2017, this lovely Savigny bottling is back and quite tasty, though it had been bottled at the end of August and was still a bit bound up in its structure post-bottling when I tasted it in November, so I have scored it in a range. The bouquet is bright and red fruity, offering up scents of cherries, red berries, a nice touch of stems, woodsmoke, stony soil elements and a bit of Savigny spice in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and has good depth at the core, with ripe, fairly firm tannins, good focus and grip and a long, chewy and still fairly adolescent finish. This will need a few years, but will be quite good. 2024-2050+. **88-89+.**



2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

This is the first vintage of the Savigny-lès-Beaune premier cru of “aux Guettes” produced by Maison Drouhin and it is outstanding. The excellent bouquet jumps from the glass in a superb blend of strawberries, cherries, cocoa powder, lovely Savigny spice tones, a complex base of soil, a hint of youthful stems and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and quite elegant out of the blocks for a young Guettes, with a sappy core of

fruit, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. This will be an absolute steal in 2017! Bottled in mid-July. 2023-2060. **92.**

2017 Beaune “Grèves”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

This bottling is one of the great sleepers in the Drouhins’ portfolio and the 2017 is again stellar. This is all from the very top section of this vineyard, known as the Sur les Grèves, which is planted on a rare base of hard, yellow limestone and gives the wine superb mineral drive. The 2017 was still in barrel in November and absolutely singing, offering up a pure and sappy bouquet of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a fine base of soil, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with lovely focus and soil detail, ripe, suave tannins and a long, transparent and nascently complex finish. This will be outstanding with a bit of bottle age. 2025-2065. **93.**

2017 Beaune “Sizies”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The premier cru of les Sizies lies just below les Aigrots on the slope, on the Pommard side of the band of premier crus, with only a couple of *climats* from the Clos des Mouches. 2017 is the first time this wine has been bottled on its own by Maison Drouhin and the wine is lovely, offering up a bright and red fruity bouquet of strawberries, red currants, a fine base of soil, lovely spice elements from the stem inclusion and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, vibrant and has a good core, with lovely focus and balance, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. A fine new addition, the 2017 Sizies had been bottled in mid-July and was showing very well indeed. 2023-2065. **92.**

2017 Beaune “Cras”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Drouhin Beaune “Cras” was bottled at the end of August, but showing very nicely in November. The wine is young and nicely reserved in profile, offering up a pure bouquet of red and black cherries, strawberries, a superb base of soil tones, gamebird, dark chocolate, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the long and classy finish. This is a young wine and will need some time in the cellar to soften up and blossom, but it is going to be excellent. 2024-2065+. **92+.**

2017 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Clos des Mouches rouge was harvested between September 4th and 7th, with the Drouhins’ team again making five passes through the vineyard to select each parcel at the optimal moment. This is an absolutely classic vintage for this bottling, with the nose wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, gamebird, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, sappy and very long, with fine-grained tannins, lovely mid-palate depth, impressive focus and grip and a very long, very refined and energetic finish. Great juice and still in barrel in November. 2025-2065+. **93.**

2017 Nuits St. Georges- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Nuits AC from Maison Drouhin is produced from three different *climats*, with two of these on the Vosne border and one on the south side of the center of town. The 2017 version is very pretty, but this too is one of those easy-going wines structurally and will drink best in its relative youth. The stylish nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, open and already tasty, with not a ton of mid-palate depth, quite modest tannins and solid length and grip on the suave and easy to drink finish. This was still in cask. 2018-2035+. **88.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Chambolle *villages* bottling from Joseph Drouhin is a step up in mid-palate stuffing from the Nuits. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a refined mix of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, mustard seed and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and tangy, with a really lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature, tangy acids and fine length and grip on the suavely tannic finish. Still in cask. This is a very pretty AC. 2020-2045+. **90+**.

2017 Vosne-Romanée- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Vosne-Romanée from Maison Joseph Drouhin is also a very good example of a *villages* level wine, with impressive purity and complexity on both the nose and palate, but without quite the same core of red fruit as is found in the Chambolle this year. The bouquet is bright and complex, delivering scents of raspberries, cherries, Vosne spice, duck, cedar and a very good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, transparent and very nicely delineated, with discreet tannins, tangy acids and fine focus and grip on the long and classy finish. It is just a touch *fluide* at the center in comparison to the Chambolle, but delightful in all other aspects. Still in cask. 2021-2045. **90**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Gevrey AC from the Drouhins is another very stylish *villages* that could do with just a touch more mid-palate stuffing, but offers up impressive complexity on both the nose and palate. The fine bouquet delivers scents of black cherries, black plums, dark soil tones, grilled meats, woodsmoke, mustard seed and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, balanced and nicely soil-driven, with refined, easy-going tannins, good length and focus and a touch of *fluidité* at the core that keeps the score down just a touch. But, all in all, this is still a very good *villages* bottling. This too was a barrel sample. 2020-2045. **89**.

2017 Nuits St. Georges “les Procès”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I am always a bit amazed at how elegant the Nuits St. Georges “les Procès” bottling from Maison Drouhin is year in and year out, as this premier cru lies alongside of les Pruliers, which always produces more broad-shouldered examples of Nuits. The 2017 les Procès is a very good wine, offering up a refined bouquet of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, *pigeon*, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and gently sappy at the core, with lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the complex finish. This fine wine in the making was still in barrel in November. 2025-2065. **92**.

2017 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Chambolle Premier Cru *chez* Drouhin was still in cask in November and showing lovely potential. The bouquet is deep and classy, wafting from the glass in a nicely sappy blend of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird, a touch of mustard seed and a lovely base of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and elegant, with a good, solid core, lovely shape and bounce, moderate tannins and fine length and grip on the complex and refined finish. 2025-2060. **92**.

2017 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I have really liked the premier cru bottling of Clos Prieur added to the Drouhin family’s lineup a few years ago and the 2017 is another very good bottle, but this is one of those wines that shows just a bit of *fluidité* in the mid-palate and will probably not make old bones. The bouquet is really pretty and quite soil-driven in personality, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, strawberries, dark soil tones, grilled meats, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the

wine is pure, full and nicely transparent, with lovely complexity and bounce, but not a whole lot of mid-palate stuffing. The finish is long, modestly tannic and wide open. Still in barrel. 2022-2050. **89.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Vosne “Premier Cru” bottling is made from purchased grapes from the vineyards of Petits Monts, Chaumes and Malconsorts, which is a pretty impressive combination. The 2017 vintage is only the second for this cuvée and it is quickly becoming a favorite of mine in their lineup, as the wine offers up a very complex and refined bouquet of red and black raspberries, sweet dark berries, duck, Vosne spices, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and vibrant in personality, with a lovely core of gently sappy fruit, fine soil signature, fine-grained tannins and lovely length and grip on the beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice (still in cask). 2025-2060+. **92+.**

2017 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Joseph Drouhin 2017 Petits Monts was picked on September 8th in this vintage and included forty percent whole clusters. The wine is stunning on both the nose and palate and once again, one of the best wines in the cellar in 2017. The magical bouquet delivers scents of black raspberries, sweet dark berries, duck, Vosne spice tones, dark soil, raw cocoa, a touch of youthful sweet stems and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sleek and elegant in profile, with great transparency, a sappy core, silky tannins and brilliant backend energy and lift on the long and tangy finish. A great wine (still in cask). 2025-2065+. **94+.**

2017 Corton- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Corton bottling from Maison Drouhin is made from purchased grapes and is going to be their workhorse from the hill of Corton for several years to come, as they have finally had to replant their parcel in Corton “Bressandes”. The grapes from this bottling are almost entirely from Renardes and the 2017 is outstanding, offering up a stellar nose of red and black cherries, spiced meats, coriander seed, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven in personality, with a superb core of pure fruit, ripe tannins and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced, young finish. Great juice (and still in cask). 2028-2075. **94.**

2017 Charmes-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

A couple of years ago the Drouhins switched suppliers in Charmes-Chambertin and the wine has jumped up in quality as a result, making this now one of the best-kept grand cru secrets in their stellar lineup. The 2017 Charmes is flat out stunning, delivering great purity and aromatic complexity in its bouquet of black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core with sappy fruit. The finish is long, ripely tannic and utterly seamless, with great focus and grip, excellent mineral drive and lovely lift and backend energy. The 2017 Charmes included thirty percent whole clusters this year and was still in barrel in November. Great juice. 2025-2075+. **95.**

2017 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” from Maison Joseph Drouhin this year is a combination of the domaine’s own fruit and some purchased grapes. The wine includes forty percent whole clusters and was a cask sample at the time of our tasting. The bouquet is nicely reserved in profile and very complex, offering up scents of red and black cherries, gorgeous spice tones, mustard seed, grilled meats, a fine base of soil, a touch of youthful stems, woodsmoke, raw cocoa and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and

pure, with a sappy core, velvety tannins and lovely length and grip on the complex and very promising finish. This is not as overtly sappy and seductive out of the blocks as the stunning 2017 Charmes-Chambertin, but it may well catch up with it in the fullness of time. 2025-2075+. **94.**

2017 Clos de Vougeot- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family's 2017 Clos de Vougeot is very elegantly structured this year, with plenty of sappy fruit and excellent soil signature. The quite black fruity bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of black cherries, cassis, venison, complex soil tones, woodsmoke, a nice touch of stems, dark chocolate and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already quite velvety on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, suave, fine-grained tannins and a long, seductive and very promising finish. Fine juice in the making. 2024-2065+. **92+.**

2017 Grands Echézeaux- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Grands Echézeaux from Maison Joseph Drouhin is another brilliant example of the vintage. The wine was still in barrel in November, with the grapes having been picked on September 8th for this wine and thirty-five percent whole clusters included this year. The wine is still a puppy and was in the process of absorbing its thirty percent new oak, but all of the constituent components are in place for a stunning wine down the road. The still slightly new oak bouquet (which of course will pass in due course) offers up a refined blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebird, dark chocolate, a bit of sweet stems and the aforementioned spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and rock solid at the core, with lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and huge backend energy giving the wine stunning length and grip on the perfectly balanced and complex finish. Great juice. 2029-2085. **95+.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny "les Baudes"- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The team at Maison Drouhin only breaks out the Baudes from the Premier Cru blend in vintages that are extremely strong, and I was very happy to see that there will be a 2017 les Baudes this year. This is excellent wine in the making (still in cask), delivering marvelous purity in its aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, chalky soil tones, mustard seed, espresso, *pigeon*, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. I feared this wine might be a little swamped, given the big name bottlings that were served ahead of it at our tasting, but it held its own just fine and is a dynamite wine in 2017! 2025-2060. **93.**

2017 Chambolle-Musigny "les Amoureuses"- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The picking teams at Maison Drouhin had to be extremely busy on September 8th of 2017, as they brought in this vineyard, les Baudes, Grands Echézeaux and Musigny all on the same day! The 2017 les Amoureuses here is everything one could hope for, delivering beautifully perfumed nose of cherries, red plums, a hint of beetroot, gamebird, raw cocoa, mustard seed, cedar and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already quite velvety on the attack, with a sappy core, marvelous intensity of flavor, suave tannins, fine focus and grip and a very long, very pure and complex finish. 2024-2075. **95.**



2017 Bonnes-Mares- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2017 Bonnes-Mares was the only grand cru here picked after the rainy weekend, as the team chose to let the vineyard dry out a bit and gather the grapes on the 13th of the month. The later picking date has done nothing to lessen the quality of this wine, as it is stellar in this vintage, soaring from the glass in a stunning blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, *pigeon*, complex soil tones, bitter chocolate, mustard seed, a touch of fresh thyme, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and voluptuous on the attack, with a sappy core, great soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a very, very long, refined and oh so promising finish. A great Bonnes-Mares. 2027-2085+. **95+**.

2017 Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family's 2017 Musigny was one of the best wines I tasted on this trip and it is clearly a candidate for wine of the vintage this year! The wine was still in cask and showing brilliant potential at the time of my visit, offering up a celestial bouquet of red and black cherries, black plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, mustard seed, woodsmoke, a nice touch of sweet stems and a refined base of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and utterly refined, with a sappy core of fruit, stunning mineral complexity, fine-grained tannins and utterly superb backend amplitude and precision on the very, very long and elegant finish. Simply gorgeous. 2030-2100. **97+**.

Volnay

Domaine Michel Lafarge (Volnay)

Frédéric and the Lafarge family started picking on September 2nd in 2017, getting out early in their vines in both the Clos du Château de Ducs and Pézerolles to bring in perfectly ripe grapes on that day, and they paused until the 5th of the month to get rolling in all their other parcels. Interestingly, as the sugar levels had soared in the wake of the heat spike the third week of August in those two premier crus, Monsieur Lafarge decided to de-stem both wines one hundred percent this year (as the stems were not as ripe as the grapes) and did so completely by hand- an arduous undertaking that I have only heard of Klaus-Peter and Julia Keller doing in the Rheinhessen with certain of their pinot noir bottlings. It seemed to work beautifully for the Lafarges, as the two wines were showing stunning potential. The 2017 vintage is the first time in many years now that the family domaine has their full roster of bottlings present, as the estate sidestepped potential frost damage, along with everyone else in Volnay, and realized a full crop for the first time since the 2009 vintage. The cellars at the domaine have been woefully short of casks these last seven vintages, so it was heartwarming to see it properly full of barrels of both the 2017s and the 2018s, so there will finally be a reasonable quantity of bottles of Domaine Lafarge wines in the market, after so many very short crops in a row. And the 2017s are flat out stunning and one of the best recent vintages from Domaine Lafarge in a while. The white wines here are very pretty, juicy and nicely transparent, with generally moderate levels of acidity that give the wines plenty of bounce and freshness, but which will not impede progress towards immediate enjoyment. Only the Clos des Aigrots Blanc has the spine of acidity that will merit more than a few years in the cellar before it reaches its peak. Amongst the red wines, the quality is consistent from top to bottom and this is a really superb range of wines, with many of the cuvées showing beautiful red fruity personalities in 2017, and which I always take as a very, very good sign chez Lafarge. While many of the domaine's biggest fans understandably focus on the very top bottlings here, the lower level wines like the Côte de Beaune-Villages really merit attention as well and should not be overlooked in the rush to try and latch onto a few bottles of Clos du Château des Ducs, Clos des Chênes or Caillerets! I know Volnay lovers do not always pay attention to the Pommard cuvées in their favorite cellars in the vintage, but this would be quite the mistake with the stunning 2017 Pézerolles that the Lafarges have crafted this year! I did not get a chance to say hello to Michel Lafarge during my visit this year, so I do not have his insights into what the 2017 vintage stylistically resembles, based on his very long experience, but Frédéric did report that his father was very, very happy with the quality of the 2017s. The domaine plans to bottle their 2017s reds in April of 2019. This is a stellar vintage chez Lafarge!

Vins Blancs de Domaine Lafarge

2017 Bourgogne Aligoté “Raisin d’Orée”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Bourgogne Aligoté “Raisin d’Orée” from Domaine Lafarge is really lovely this year, with an early plumpness in the mid-palate that is not always evident with this wine out of the blocks and which, to my mind, augurs extremely well for its future evolution. This was the last parcel picked in 2017, with the grapes harvested on the 21st of September. The bouquet here is bright and classy, offering up scents of lemon, green apple, orange peel, stony soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with fine soil signature, bright acids and fine length and grip on the zesty finish. Good juice in the making. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Interestingly, the 2017 Meursault AC from the Lafarge family is actually a bit more forward than their lovely Aligoté this year! The wine is vibrant and wide open on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, peach, almond, chalky soil tones a lovely topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and succulent on the attack, with a fine core, very good framing acids and a long, complex and already quite delicious finish. This does not have the girdle of acidity to make old bones, but there is plenty here to keep it light on its feet during the first decade in the bottle. 2018-2030. **90.**

2017 Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

It has been a few vintages since the Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées” was produced and I was quite pleased to see it in the 2017 lineup. The wine has more cut and mineral drive than the straight *villages*, offering up a fine bouquet of apple, a touch of tangerine, orange peel, limestone minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a lovely synthesis of pure fruit and minerality, with good acids, fine focus and grip and a long and nicely lifted finish. Good juice. 2021-2040. **91+.**

2017 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots” Blanc- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Clos des Aigrots blanc is excellent this year. The wine is pure and complex on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering scents of apple, white peach, chalky minerality, a touch of fresh almond, beeswax and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and shows a nice touch of reserve to its personality, with a fine core, excellent transparency, bright, zesty acids and very good grip on the long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This will want a few years in the cellar to blossom, but will prove to be outstanding. 2021-2045+. **93.**

Vins Rouges de Domaine Lafarge

2017 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Exception”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Cuvée Exception is really very, very good this year, with a red fruity and soil-driven personality and admirable complexity for its level. The nose jumps from the glass in a fine blend of strawberries, cherries, a complex base of soil, a touch of cocoa powder and a floral topnote of dusty rose. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and wide open in personality, with a good core, superb transparency, very little tannin and a long, seamless and vibrant finish. Good juice and a bargain. 2018-2030. **88.**

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Domaine Lafarge Bourgogne is usually a pretty black fruity customer, but the 2017 version is just rolling around in red fruit tones. The nose delivers a fine constellation of cherries, *fraises du bois*, a lovely base of soil tones, raw cocoa and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, focused and soil-driven, with very pretty fruit elements, tangy acids and just a touch of backend tannin perking up the long and promising finish. 2019-2040. **89.**

2017 Côte de Beaune-Villages- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Côte de Beaune-Villages is the first time there have been enough grapes to make this bottling since the 2011 vintage *chez* Lafarge, and it had been so many vintages without it in the lineup that I frankly had forgotten all about it! The wine has turned out beautifully in 2017 and is another excellent value in the portfolio, with the bouquet offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, cocoa powder, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is fullish, focused and nicely sappy at the core, with good soil

signature, suave tannins and a long, classy finish. This will drink beautifully from release, whereas the Bourgogne will really want a year or two to blossom. 2018-2040. **90.**

2017 Volnay- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Volnay *villages* from the Lafarges adds yet more sappiness to the mid-palate in comparison to the wines that preceded it in the tasting, while still retaining the soil-driven personality of the vintage here. The bouquet is excellent, jumping from the glass in a refined blend of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, a fine base of dark soil tones, *pigeon* and a nice touch of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely transparent, with a superb core, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very long and very elegant finish. High class AC. 2023-2060. **91.**

2017 Volnay “Vendanges Selectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Volnay “Vendanges Selectionées” is even a touch deeper and sappier than the straight *villages* bottling, delivering fine aromatics of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, woodsmoke and violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite refined in personality, with a bit of reserve to the structure, a sappy core, lovely transparency and a long, ripely tannic and very promising finish. Premier cru quality without a doubt in 2017. 2025-2065. **92.**



Frédéric Lafarge discussing the merits of the 2017 vintage in the family's cellars in Volnay.

2017 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Clos des Aigrots is an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is deep and complex, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, *pigeon*, gentle smokiness and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely reserved in personality, with a seamless attack, a sappy core, excellent soil signature and fine length and grip on the ripely tannic and very well-balanced finish. This is high class juice in the making, but it will probably want a full decade in the cellar to properly blossom and start hitting on all cylinders. 2027-2070. **92+**.

2017 Beaune “Grèves”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

A couple of years ago, I mentioned that Frédéric Lafarge had decided to replant his very old vines in Beaune “Grèves”, due to the heavy toll that the hail damage took on this parcel in the stretch from 2010 to 2014. Happily, he decided to wait and see what the spring brought and the good growing season of 2015 helped them recover quite a bit and he ended up not having to replant the vines after all, so in the 2017 vintage saw these vines mark their ninety-sixth birthday! The wine has turned out beautifully, offering up a youthful and very pure nose of cherries, red plums, a touch of chocolate, gamebird, a complex base of chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and beautifully pure at the core, with impressive soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and great length and grip on the very well-balanced and promising finish. A classic, old vine cuvée in the making. 2027-2075. **92+**.

2017 Volnay “Pitures”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

As I have mentioned in the past, the Lafarge family only owns fifteen *ares* in Pitures, so this small cuvée is always bottled exclusively in magnums from the domaine. The bouquet is lovely in the 2017, with quite a bit of red fruit infusing the nose (which is almost always very black fruity) in its mix of cherries, a touch of dark berry, *pigeon*, bonfire, French Roast, dark soil tones and a nice touch of fresh herbs in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, soil-driven and full-bodied, with a fien core of fruit, suave, ripe tannins and excellent balance and focus on the long, nascently complex and utterly classical finish. 2028-2070. **92+**.

2017 Volnay “Mitans”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Mitans *chez* Lafarge included forty percent whole clusters in this vintage and is the most black fruity premier cru in the cellars this year. The superb bouquet delivers scents of black plums, cassis, espresso, a beautiful array of dark soil elements, woodsmoke, venison and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and black fruity in personality, with fine transparency, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long, youthful finish that closes with a lovely synthesis of fruit and soil. Classy juice. 2027-2070. **93**.

2017 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Pommard “Pézerolles” from Domaine Lafarge is another wonderfully red fruity wine in the cellars this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of strawberries, red plums, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of roses. On the palate the wine is elegant, pure and very much defined by its soil, with a great core of sappy fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and outstanding precision and grip on the refined, pure and nascently complex finish. This is a very, very elegant Pommard. 2027-2075. **93+**.

2017 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Lafarge family’s version of Caillerets is also beautifully classical in its expression of this great *terroir*, with the nose delivering a constellation of red plums, cherries,

lovely spice tones, gamebird, cocoa powder, iron-infused minerality and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and utterly refined out of the blocks, with a great core of fruit, superb backend mineral drive, ripe tannins and excellent balance and grip on the long and complex finish. Great juice. 2027-2075. **94**.

2017 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Clos des Chênes is again quite remarkable for its extremely red fruity personality this year. The youthful and precise nose is pure and very, very promising, delivering a mix of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, a complex base of minerality, *pigeon*, woodsmoke and a nice base of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very pure on the attack, with a tightly-knit, but sappy core of fruit, excellent soil complexity, fine-grained tannins and outstanding backend energy on the very, very long and refined finish. 2029-2075. **94+**.

2017 Volnay “Clos du Château des Ducs”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2017 Clos du Château des Ducs from the Lafarges was really singing at the time of my mid-November visit. The bouquet is again, strikingly red fruity in profile this year, soaring from the glass in a blaze of red plums, sappy cherries, a touch of blood orange, raw cocoa, gamebird, a touch of hazelnut, gorgeous soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in its structural chassis this year, with a sappy core, lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. Impeccable juice this year. 2027-2075. **94+**.

Domaine Joseph Voillot (Volnay)

This was my second visit to Domaine Joseph Voillot in Volnay and proprietor, Jean-Pierre Charlot was away, so, as was the case in March, I had the pleasure to again taste with his nephew, Etienne Chaix, who is being groomed to take over the administration of the estate in due course. Joseph Voillot had two daughters, with one marrying Monsieur Charlot, which is how Jean-Pierre came to be the proprietor at Domaine Voillot. The timing of my visit was not the best in the world, as the white wines and the Bourgogne Passetoutgrains had been bottled only a week before my visit, and the remainder of the red wines had been racked and assembled only three weeks earlier. So, nothing was all that happy about being tasted on the tenth of November, but with a bit of coaxing, the wines eventually started to reveal a few of their secrets and it is quite clear that this is a very strong vintage for the Charlot family. As I mentioned last spring, I have been remiss in not visiting this domaine previously, as I have always enjoyed their wines when I have had the opportunity to drink them and find them to be very much classical expressions of very top terroirs in both Volnay and Pommard. Prior to my November visit, I had never tasted any of the white wines from Domaine Joseph Voillot and was quite impressed with their high quality levels as well, though with the wines only having been in bottle for a week, I was only seeing a glimpse of what they will offer in due course. With the reds in the cellar (other than the Passetoutgrains) also having been recently racked into tanks, none of the wines was spot on and singing at the time of my visit, so I have scored the wines within a range, but would fully expect each and every one to eventually place at the top of the range when they have recovered from their recent bottling or racking, as the case may be.

This is an important domaine in Volnay, farming fully nine hectares of vineyards, spread out between the villages of Volnay, Pommard and Meursault, with their largest premier cru parcels found in the vineyards of Champans and Fremiets in Volnay and Pézerolles in Pommard. Add to these smaller slices of Caillerets, Epenots and Rugiens, amongst other premier crus and

one can see that there are some very fine holdings here. There are lots of old vines in the various premier crus farmed by the Charlot family. The domaine also has nearly two hectares of vines at the villages level in both Pommard and Volnay and make very good examples of both. Their two Meursault bottlings, of les Chevalières and Les Cras are made from small parcels of around fifteen ares each and so are far more limited. Yields here in 2017 were a far cry from the tiny production figures of 2016, as the domaine was hit hard by frost in that year, and generally were in line with what was produced here in the 2009 vintage. So, generous yields, but not overly so. The family started picking their red grapes on September 6th in 2017. Etienne Chaix and his uncle, Jean-Pierre Charlot, opted for using ten to fifteen percent new oak for their red premier crus this year and the wines showed beautiful soil signatures as a result. I have to assume they will be quite sappy as well once they settle in from their recent racking, and there are some truly excellent 2017s waiting in the Domaine Voillot cellars this year. I had to feel a bit sorry for Monsieur Chaix as I finished up my tasting and his next appointment arrived, as it was a fairly full tour bus and it looked like he was going to be very busy filling glasses over the next hour and a half! Such is the rhythm of Burgundy in November these days.



Etienne Chaix, the nephew of Jean-Pierre Charlot and the future head of Domaine Joseph Voillot.

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2017 Bourgogne Aligoté from Domaine Voillot is made from pretty old vines, as these were planted back in 1950. These vines are in Meursault. The wine was showing very well

for having just been bottled, offering up scents of apple, tart orange, a good base of soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and quite long and soil-driven, with good cut and grip and plenty of mid-palate stuffing for Aligoté. Good juice. 2018-2027. **87-88.**

2017 Meursault “les Chevalières”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

There are three casks of the 2017 Meursault “les Chevalières” from the domaine in 2017, so one barrel was new this year. These are some of the youngest vines that the domaine exploits, as they were planted in 1979, but have now reached a good age. The bouquet of the 2017 was still a bit shut down after its recent bottling, but with some swirling eventually was coaxed into showing notes of apple, lime, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, bright and focused, with a fine core of fruit, good mineral drive, vibrant acids and very good length and grip on the youthful finish. This is clearly going to be quite good and I would love to see it again when it is fully recovered, as it should offer up very good value. 2019-2030+. **89-90+.**

2017 Meursault “les Cras”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The Charlot family has just under fourteen *ares* of vines in the premier cru of les Cras, with the parcel having been planted in two stages, in 1963 and 1980. As is the case with the Chevalières in 2017, there are three *pièces* in the cellar this year and one was a new barrel. This had bounced back from its very recent bottling a bit more than the above wine and showed excellent potential, offering up a nose of apple, pear, almond, a hint of iodine, chalky minerality and a discreet base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and racy, with a fine core, excellent cut and grip and a long, soil-driven and bouncy finish. This is going to be very good indeed. 2018-2040. **91-92.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The Bourgogne *rouge* bottling from Domaine Voillot is made from old vine pinot noir, with the vines from the two different parcels that comprised the cuvée more than fifty years of age. This wine had been bottled at the end of August of 2018 and was nicely bounced back from its *mise* at the time of my visit, offering up scents of strawberries, cherries, coffee, a good base of soil tones and a topnote of bonfires. On the palate the wine is medium-full, tangy and nicely soil-driven, with good focus and just a touch of backend tannin perking up the finish. A good example. 2019-2030. **87+.**

2017 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The Volnay AC bottling is made from eight different parcels, which combine to reach just under two hectares, so this is an important bottling for the domaine and it is excellent in 2017. The oldest vines in the cuvée date back all the way to 1930, with the vast majority incorporated here having been planted between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. The 2017 was showing well for its recent *assemblage*, offering up scents of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a fine base of soil and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, poised and soil-driven, with a good core of ripe fruit, moderate tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused and nicely balanced finish. This is a very good example in the making. 2022-2045+. **89-90+.**

2017 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The old vine Pommard AC bottling is made from four different parcels and their age is quite similar to that of the Volnay *villages*, with the oldest dating back to 1934 and the average

age in the blend fully fifty years. This too was showing excellent potential in the 2017 vintage, delivering a fine nose of cherries, quince, woodsmoke, a touch of cocoa powder, a fine base of soil and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely transparent in personality, with a very good core of red fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, elegant and moderately chewy finish. This is very polite for young Pommard and is going to drink very well with five or six years' worth of bottle age under its belt. An excellent value. 2024-2050+. **89-91.**

2017 Beaune “aux Coucheries”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

I did not taste the Beaune “aux Coucheries” when I visited the domaine last spring to sample the 2016s, so this was my first experience with this cuvée. The family's vines average just over forty-five years of age in this premier cru, which lies right up at the top of the slope above aux Cras in the center of the hillside of premier crus in Beaune. The Domaine Voillot 2017 version is a fine wine in the making, delivering a fine aromatic profile of red and black cherries, gamebird, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, a touch of fresh nutmeg and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, elegant and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with suave tannins, a nice sense of sappiness and a long, bouncy finish that closes with fine focus and grip. This is a first class premier cru in the making. 2024-2060. **91-92.**

2017 Volnay “Fremiets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The domaine has old vines here in Fremiets as well, as the oldest were planted back in 1932 and the average age here is sixty-five. The 2017 Fremiets was showing beautifully at the time of my visit and had clearly bounced back from its *assemblage*, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of red plums, cherries, *pigeons*, a touch of mustard seed, cocoa powder, a fine base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, lovely, ripe and suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the beautifully balanced and complex finish. Classic Volnay in the making! 2025-2065. **92-93.**

2017 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

This is the smallest parcel of premier cru vines that the family owns in Volnay, at just under fourteen *ares*, and also the youngest vines they have in any of their premier crus, having been planted in 1984. The 2017 Caillerets *chez* Charlot is a classic expression of this great premier cru *terroir*, offering up a complex nose of cherries, red berries, stony soil tones, gamebird, bonfire, lovely spices, raw cocoa and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in profile, with a rock solid core, very good focus and grip, excellent backend mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and a long, precise and very promising finish. I really like the lift on the finish that the Caillerets is showing right out of the blocks! This will be outstanding. 2026-2065. **92-93.**

2017 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2017 Volnay “Champans” from Domaine Joseph Voillot is another stellar wine in the making. The Charlot family has just over one *hectare* of vines here, with the vines averaging sixty-plus years of age and the oldest parcel dating back to 1934. The wine is very promising on both the nose and palate in 2017, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, a touch of dark berry, squab, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a nice touch of violet in the upper register and the vintage's signature note of raw cocoa. With air, the nose becomes more dominantly red fruity in profile, but the nice black fruity notes persist below. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with superb soil signature and grip, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and great focus on the long and nascently complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2065. **92-93+.**

2017 Pommard “Clos Micault”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The premier cru of Clos Micault lies right next to the center of town in Pommard, at the bottom of the slope once one has driven through downtown, and the Charlot family has just under fourteen *ares* of vines here, so this too is one of their tiniest production wines. The vines were planted in 1958 and the domaine produced three casks here in 2017, which was a decided improvement from 2016, where the frost completely wiped out production here. The 2017 Clos Micault was showing beautifully at the time of my visit, offering up a very red fruity nose of cherries, quince, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, a nice touch of cinnamon, vanillin oak and a delicate topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent in profile, with a sappy core of red fruit, ripe tannins, good acids and fine focus and grip on the long and promising finish. This is good juice in the making. 2026-2060. **92-93.**

2017 Pommard “Epenots”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The domaine’s parcel in Epenots is not a lot bigger than the Clos Micault, as they have just under eighteen *ares* of vines planted in 1961. The 2017 Epenots from Domaine Voillot is an excellent bottle, offering up a very expressive bouquet of red and black cherries, quince, dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, just a whisper of mustard seed and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a rock solid core, excellent soil signature, with fine-grained tannins and a very long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. 2027-2065+. **92-93+.**

2017 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Maybe it is my experience with the Pézerolles from the Lafarge family, but this is always one of my favorite premier crus in Pommard and Domaine Voillot makes another absolutely stellar example of this excellent *terroir*. This is the Charlot family’s largest holding of premier cru vines in the village, totaling a smidgeon under forty *ares*, with the vines all having been planted in 1963. The resulting wine is absolutely superb in 2017, soaring from the glass in a deep and sappy blend of red plums, red and black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile out of the blocks, with excellent soil signature, sappy fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, tangy and complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2065. **93-94.**

2017 Pommard “Rugiens”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The family has just over a quarter of a hectare of vines here in Rugiens *Bas*, with the vines having been planted in 1959. The domaine’s 2017 Rugiens was showing superb potential at the time of my visit and is the crown jewel this year in its stellar lineup of premier crus. The bouquet is pure, refined and very promising, delivering a beautiful constellation of cherries, quince, a nice touch of raspberry, woodsmoke, superb minerality, a touch of mustard seed, raw cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite mineral-driven in personality, with a sappy core of red fruit, ripe, suave tannins and a very long, very complex and utterly refined finish. This makes a pretty strong argument for Rugiens *Bas* eventually being promoted to grand cru! 2027-2070. **93-94+.**

Auxey-Duresses

Domaine Gilles Lafouge (Auxey-Duresses)

Gilles Lafouge has been joined by his son, Maxim, at the domaine, beginning with the 2018 vintage. The younger Lafouge scion finished up his studies at the oenological school in Beaune in time to participate fully in the 2018 harvest and vinification, and then will do stages in

South Africa and Oregon wine countries before returning full-time to Auxey-Duresses for future vintages. However, Gilles Lafouge was on his own in 2017 and this did not seem to hamper him at all, as he has made some of the finest wines of his very successful career in the 2017 vintage. As the microclimates in Auxey-Duresses are a bit cooler than in neighboring villages, there was no need to start picking in August here to keep mineral drive and racy grip in the white wines, as Monsieur Lafouge began the harvest on the 4th of September. At the time of my visit, all of the wines in the cellar had been racked and assembled in tank for their last five to six months of élevage, as is customary chez Lafouge, and the wines were almost uniformly showing beautifully. The sole exception was the fine Auxey rouge bottling from the premier cru of les Duresses, which had only been recently racked and was still a bit unsettled. Gilles mentioned that it had reached a perfect point of equilibrium in its élevage just before my visit, so he will bottle this cru a bit earlier and preserve its inherent elegance and perfume, so it was in the preparatory process for bottling in the not too distant future. The white wines here have the cut and grip on the backend that only the most successful whites of the vintage possess, coupled with outstanding depth and purity of fruit and they will be great, great values. The red wines chez Lafouge in 2017 are absolutely classic and perhaps the finest range produced here since the brilliant 2005s. The reds are deep, pure, sappy and very soil-driven, with fine-grained tannins, excellent acidities for the vintage and superb potential to drink very nicely after three to five years in the cellar and still last for many decades. It is a great vintage for this under the radar, but extremely talented vigneron.

2017 Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 Domaine Lafouge Aligoté really has some depth and mid-palate stuffing this year, nicely coupled to the varietal's lovely spine of acidity and very good, chalky minerality. The classy nose wafts from the glass in a mix of green apple, lemon, a touch of bee pollen, chalky soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and quite long, with a lovely core of fruit, fine focus and grip and a long, classy finish. As is customary here, one-third of the cuvée is barrel-fermented, which gives the wine a sense of roundness not typical with Aligoté. Good juice. 2018-2030. **87+**.

2017 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Hautés"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Hautés" from Gilles Lafouge is superb and will be a terrific value. The complex and vibrant bouquet delivers scents of apple, pear, dried flowers, a good base of limestone minerality, a hint of vanillin oak and a topnote of lime peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, impeccable balance, bright acids and very good mineral drive on the long and vibrant finish. Lovely. 2018-2035+. **90**.

2017 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Boutonniers"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

I discovered on this trip that the vineyard of les Boutonniers is very good for pinot noir as well, as this is the *climat* from which the Coche family produces their Auxey rouge bottling. The 2017 Boutonniers blanc from Gilles Lafouge is simply excellent, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of apple, pear, a touch of fresh almond, orange zest, plenty of chalky minerality and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and crisp, with a lovely core, impressive cut and grip and a long, focused and zesty finish of fine complexity. This is classy and will be an absolute steal at its price. 2018-2040. **91+**.

2017 Meursault- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

It is not just the Auxey blanc cuvées *chez* Lafouge that have excellent cut and grip on 2017, as this Meursault *villages* shows off beautiful structural tension. The nose is bright and classic, jumping from the glass in a mix of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with a superb core for a *villages* bottling, lovely focus and grip and a long, bouncy and nicely tensile finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045. **91.**

2017 Meursault “Meix Chavaux”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

I had the pleasure to taste a few examples of Meix Chavaux on this trip and my favorite was to be found in the Lafouge cellars. The stunning nose offers up a complex blend of lime zest, passion fruit, pear, limestone minerality, a touch of iodine, almond, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with a superb core of fruit, fine transparency and a long, succulent and vibrant finish. This is made from vines that are now ninety years-old and this really shows in this stunning 2017. 2018-2040+. **93.**

2017 Meursault “Casse Têtes”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 Meursault “Casse Têtes” from Domaine Lafouge is also excellent on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a classic blend of pear, apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and a bit more reserved today than the Meix Chavaux, with a fine core, lovely focus and cut and impressive lift on the long and nascently complex finish. This too is excellent. 2021-2040+. **92+.**



2017 Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The Lafouge family's 2017 Bourgogne rouge is a very good example, offering up a bright bouquet of cherries, quince, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke and a gentle topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, nicely soil-driven and tangy, with a solid core and just a bit of ripe tannin perking up the quite long finish. These vines are directly across the RN-74 from the vines of the Château de Pommard as one enters into Pommard from Beaune. Good juice. 2021-2035+. **88.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 Auxey-Duresses rouge is a very strong *villages*. The nose is pure and complex, delivering a fine blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively transparent in personality, with a good sappy core, lovely purity and bounce, modest tannins and a long, soil-driven finish. Good juice that will age very nicely, yet drink with serious generosity with only a couple of years in the cellar. 2021-2045+. **90.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge "les Ecusseaux"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The les Ecusseaux bottling of Auxey rouge was new to the domaine seven or eight vintages ago, but was such a small cuvée at the time (and already well-spoken for by the domaine's private French clients) that the 2017 was the first vintage I have ever tasted here. Gilles Lafouge has gotten more vines in the *climat* from a cousin and now has a slightly larger cuvée, so this is another wine to add to your Domaine Lafouge wish list. The vines here range from forty to fifty-five years of age and the 2017 shows lovely depth on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of sweet dark berries, red cherries, a touch of pomegranate, lovely minerality, mustard seed and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with good mineral drive, a very good core, lovely focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, promising finish. A fine (relatively) new addition to the lineup. 2023-2050. **91.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge "Climat du Valle"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 Climat du Valle from Gilles Lafouge is truly excellent. The nose wafts from the glass in a classy and red fruity blend of cherries, pomegranate, mustard seed, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, roses and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full and quite sappy at the core, with lovely focus and grip, ripe, suave tannins, tangy acids and a long, elegant and soil-driven finish. This is going to be a very, very good bottle of Auxey with just a bit of patience. 2023-2050. **92.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge "la Chapelle"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 la Chapelle from Domaine Lafouge is an outstanding wine. The bouquet is pure and sappy on the nose, jumping from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, pomegranate, violets, raw cocoa, complex soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and a discreet touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and sappy, with lovely soil signature, a very refined personality, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and transparent finish. Great juice. 2025-2065. **93+.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge "les Duresses"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

As I mentioned in the intro, this wine had just been racked shortly before my visit, as it is scheduled for an earlier bottling, so it was not completely on form. But, there are enough of its constituent components on display to know this is an outstanding and very elegant bottle in the making. The nose is a lovely, complex and red fruity blend of strawberries, cherries,

pomegranate, cocoa powder, chalky soil tones, a whisper of mustard seed, *pigeon*, cedar and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and shapely, with a good core, superb transparency, suave tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Great wine for sure, but it is not quite precise today, as it has not yet snapped back in after its racking. But, it is very hard to imagine it not eventually deserving the higher score in the range. 2024-2065. **92-93+**.

2017 Pommard “les Noizons”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

I really like the size and shape of the les Noizons *chez* Lafouge in the 2017 vintage. The nose is a pure and classy mix of red and black cherries, a touch of blueberry, gamebird, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, gentle smokiness and a topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and soil-driven, with ripe, well-integrated tannins, tangy acids and a long, properly structured and very nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2025-2065. **91**.

2017 Pommard “les Chanlins”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2017 les Chanlins from the Lafouge family is a great bottle of Pommard in the making. The bouquet is pure and exudes impressive elegance out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a mix of quince, red cherries, *pigeon*, raw cocoa, mustard seed, cedar and a very complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and impressively pure and soil-driven, with a rock solid core, fine-grained tannins and a very long, tangy and nascently complex finish. This is one of my favorite premier crus in Pommard and Gilles Lafouge has fashioned an exceptional fine example here in 2017. 2028-2075. **93+**.

Meursault

Domaine Coche-Dury (Meursault)

I had not been tasting in the Coche family cellars since November of 2010, so I was very happy to have the opportunity to visit again this year. As I mentioned in an article on the family’s superb Corton-Charlemagne earlier in the year, Raphaël and Jean-François Coche had invited me at that tasting last February to come by in November and taste the new vintage, which I very happily accepted. In the old days, when I used to visit the domaine twice every year and taste with Jean-François, I would never be quite sure what he would be ready to show, as he has always been quite strict about not showing his young wines out of cask unless they were in proper shape for tasting, and it seems that his son Raphaël is much in agreement with his father, so he had generously prepared his entire range of 2016s for me to taste this November. The bottling of the 2016s had been in April of 2018, so the wines had recovered beautifully by the time of my visit. Raphaël Coche observed that he sometimes sees notes on the family’s wines taken from barrel samples and he has not sometimes felt that certain notes were particularly accurate, so it is much easier to hold off and just show the finished wines once they have been bottled. As we were tasting the frost-shortened crop of 2016, Raphaël Coche noted that the yields had varied quite a bit, as some of their parcels were not particularly hard hit by the freeze, while others were quite heavily frosted. Amongst the family’s superb lineup of red wines, their parcels of vines in Champagne and Clos des Chênes (which they blend together to make their Premier Cru bottling) were just barely frosted and the wine is very classically proportioned as a result. The other red wine parcels were frosted quite badly, with yields down anywhere from fifty to seventy-five percent, and those wines were really quite concentrated as a result- though still showing excellent potential. With the white wine cuvées in 2016, again, the yields varied enormously, with the family’s parcels in Narvaux, Rougeots, Genevrières and Perrières either not frosted at all or barely touched, but their Puligny “Enseignères” was down by seventy-five percent, their Caillerets by sixty percent and the Bourgogne Blanc and straight Meursault

parcels also frozen pretty seriously. But, despite the wide spread of potential yields due to frost damage in 2016, the wines across the board are outstanding and every bit as superb as I recall from my decade or more when I was in and out of the domaine's cellars two or three times a year. I had heard around that the last few vintages from the domaine had not been up to its lofty historical standards, but having not tasted those wines, I do not know if there is any merit in the observations or not. But, clearly there is nothing amiss with the stunning lineup of 2016s chez Coche, which are every bit as magical as any young vintage I have had the pleasure to taste from the domaine, which I started visiting regularly in the mid-1990s, before my unanticipated break. These are stellar 2016s- both rouge et blanc- and are very, very highly recommended.

Vins Blancs

2016 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2016 Bourgogne Blanc from the Coche family is a lovely and absolutely classic example of this superb bottling. While I know the family's red Bourgogne plots were very badly frosted, I did not note whether or not this was the case with the Blanc as well. The bouquet here is pure and lovely, offering up scents of apple, pear, almond and a lovely base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and succulent at the core, with lovey soil signature, bright acids and excellent cut and grip on the very well-balanced finish. 2018-2040. **90+**.

2016 Meursault- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2016 Meursault AC bottling from Domaine Coche-Dury is a lovely wine, with plenty of mid-palate concentration which suggests that this too was pretty badly frosted in this vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and classic, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a nice touch of iodine, chalky minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and rock solid at the core, with bright acids, excellent focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and light on its feet finish. Fine, fine juice, that will drink well right out of the blocks, but also age very well. 2018-2040. **92**.

2016 Meursault "Narvaux"- Domaine Coche-Dury

The Narvaux bottling is always labeled just as Meursault AC, but it is reserved for specific markets, such as the US. As I mentioned in the introduction, there was very little frost here in 2016 and the wine is absolutely classical in all aspects as a result, soaring from the glass in a vibrant and complex bouquet of pear, passion fruit, apple, iodine, hazelnuts, beautiful limestone minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and racy, with excellent backend mineral drive, excellent focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and energetic finish. This will want a few years in the cellar to start to blossom fully, as it is a racier and younger wine than the above. 2021-2050. **92+**.

2016 Puligny-Montrachet "les Enseignères" - Domaine Coche-Dury

With yields off by fully seventy-five percent in 2016, the Enseignères is more concentrated at the core than usual, but this powerful profile is coupled to excellent cut and grip as well. The deep and complex nose delivers scents of apple, a touch of tangerine, chalky soil tones, almond, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really shows off superb depth at the core, with bright, snappy acids, excellent focus and balance and a very long, powerful and zesty finish. Picture a traditional aromatic and flavor profile of Coche Enseignères, but with the concentration of a grand cru in the mid-palate! 2018-2040. **92**.

2016 Meursault "Rougeots"- Domaine Coche-Dury

In contrast to the concentrated Enseignères, there was little frost in Rougeots and this wine is absolutely classic in personality in 2016. The superb bouquet jumps from the glass in a

blaze of pear, apple, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, a touch of iodine and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, pure and full-bodied, with lovely intensity of flavor, bright, zesty acids, excellent focus and grip and a very long, complex and flat out superb finish. Fine, fine juice. 2022-2050. **93+**.

2016 Meursault “Caillerets”- Domaine Coche-Dury

With the crop off by sixty percent in Caillerets in 2016, it is not surprising that this bottling is again more powerful in personality this year. The bouquet is deep, focused and very expressive, delivering a fine combination of apple, passion fruit, orange zest, white flowers, a lovely base of soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, racy and full-bodied, with a rock solid core, great cut and grip, superb backend mineral drive and a very long, complex and vibrant finish. Outstanding juice. 20121-2055. **93+**.

2016 Meursault “Genevrières” - Domaine Coche-Dury

I love the Coche family’s example of Genevrières, which was a relatively new addition to their lineup a decade ago, and I wish I had been given the chance to follow it in all of the past vintages where I was not visiting the domaine, so that I had as much familiarity with this cuvée as I do with all of their other bottlings. In any event, in 2016, this premier cru was quite lucky and the frost barely touched it, so the domaine’s version is absolutely classic in style and flat out stunning in potential. The celestial bouquet soars from the glass in a blend of passion fruit, apple, *fleur de sel*, chalky minerality, hazelnut, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and very elegant in profile, with a superb core of fruit, perfect balance, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the focused and beautifully complex finish. A great, great bottle of Genevrières. 2022-2055+. **95**.

2016 Meursault “Perrières” - Domaine Coche-Dury

There was not a whole lot of frost damage in Perrières as well in 2016, so this wine *chez* Coche has also turned out very classical in personality. The bouquet is stunning and still quite youthful, offering up scents of apple, pear, stony minerality, iodine, hazelnuts, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and racy in profile, with a superb core of fruit, brilliant soil signature, snappy acids and a very, long, complex and laser-like finish. Domaine Coche-Dury has made the reference point example of Perrières for as long as I can remember and their 2016 is once again, the stuff of legend! 2023-2060+. **96+**.

2016 Corton-Charlemagne - Domaine Coche-Dury

The family three-quarters of a *hectare* of vines in le Charlemagne are in the sector of the hill of Corton that was barely touched by frost, so the domaine was very lucky in this regard. Not surprisingly, this is pure magic, soaring from the glass in a beautiful constellation of apple, pear passion fruit, a complex base of limestone minerality, a touch of iodine, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows off stunning mid-palate depth, with great mineral drive, precise focus and grip, racy acids and a very, very long, structured and oh, so promising finish. 2026-2075. **98+**.

Vins Rouges

2016 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

The domaine’s Bourgogne *rouge* is deep and quite concentrated from the short yields of 2016. The bouquet delivers a fine mix of black cherries, dark chocolate, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke and a nice touch of gamebird in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a bit of backend tannin to resolve, with a rock solid core (particularly for Bourgogne!), fine focus and grip and a long, promising and atypically powerful finish. This is

very good and will be quite long-lived for this bottling, but will need some time in the cellar to blossom. 2022-2040+. **90.**

2016 Meursault “Côte de Beaune” Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

I did not write down in my notes if the Coche family’s parcels of pinot noir in Meursault were frost-damaged, but based on the sappiness and more classical levels of concentration on display here, I would suspect that they were not as badly- affected as some of their parcels. The wine is really lovely on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, squab, dark soil tones and a bit of upper register spiciness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite primary in profile, with good depth at the core, fine-grained tannins and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced and classy finish. 2022-2050. **91.**



Jean-François and Raphaël Coche at our Corton-Charlemagne vertical earlier this year.

2016 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

For many, many years, I have been a big fan of the domaine’s Auxey-Duresses *rouge* bottling and the 2016 is another excellent wine. This is more powerful in personality than is typical, due to frost damage and short yields, but the wine is pure and complex, as it delivers a

fine nose of black cherries, dark berries, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and a nice touch of dark chocolate. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and absolutely rock solid at the core, with ripe, moderate tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, youthful finish. I always age my bottles of Coche Auxey for five to seven years before starting to drink them, as the wine ages beautifully, and the 2016 will certainly need this bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2023-2050. **92.**

2016 Monthélie “Côte de Beaune”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2016 Monthélie “Côte de Beaune” from Domaine Coche-Dury is also quite structured and concentrated in this vintage, but with a bit of cellaring time, it is going to be excellent. The bouquet is deep and primary, wafting from the glass in a blend of dark berries, bitter chocolate, venison, chalky soil tones, a bit of bonfire and a spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with ripe, firm tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and powerful finish. All that is needed is a bit of patience here. 2023-2050. **91+.**

2016 Volnay “Premier Cru”- Domaine Coche-Dury

With the Coche family’s parcels here avoiding severe frost damage, this is a very traditionally proportioned bottle of Volnay “Premier Cru” and is not overtly powerful in personality in 2016. However, it is brilliant on both the nose and palate, with the complex bouquet offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, chalky minerality, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, beautiful soil signature, fien-grained tannins and a very long, complex and vibrant finish. Just a lovely bottle of Volnay. 2027-2075. **94+.**

Domaine Arnaud Ente (Meursault)

Arnaud Ente has once again made absolutely stunning wines in the 2017 vintage. As I mentioned in the introductory section on the vintage, Monsieur Ente and his team were the earliest to get started picking, as they brought in one parcel of younger vines on August 23rd (after the sugars began to soar in the heat spike of the third week of the month), and then took a short break before getting rolling on every other parcel on the 26th of the month. By August 31st, they had brought in everything and were able to keep alcohols quite moderate as a result and retain absolutely beautiful acidity in their finished wines. Malos here completed in the spring of 2018 and the whole cellar was assembled in tank prior to the harvest of 2018, with the wines already fined by the time of my visit on the 7th of November. A few of the white wines here show more mid-palate stuffing than is customary, which I attribute to the added vigor in the vines after the frost damage of 2016. Clearly Monsieur Ente did not allow the crop load to get overly generous, and so the vines energy has gone into producing wines of really deep mid-palate stuffing. This is not true of every wine, for example, the two Puligny premier crus were not particularly hard hit by frost in 2016 and so, did not have pent up energy to expend in the following vintage. Amongst the Meursault bottlings, the Meursault AC and Goutte d’Or were the two wines that stood out most strikingly for their added level of concentration this year, but all of the lineup has plenty of mid-palate depth in 2017. However, due to the early harvest, the depth of each wine is more than matched by racy structural chassis and exemplary minerality, so that one is never left with the impression of wines that might just be “too much of a good thing”, as was sometimes the case with some 2010 white Burgundies. Here, across the board the wines are defined by their underlying mineral drives and remain light on their feet, even where the cores

are quite concentrated this year. Not every wine is notably more concentrated than usual, but there are a few that are so, but this characteristic is not the defining element of these wines! The results are some of the most exciting wines to come out of the Ente cellars in recent times, and given the unbelievable hot streak that Monsieur Ente has been on in the last dozen years or so should provide the clue for just how beautiful the 2017s are chez Ente! One sign that the ripeness level here was quite good in 2017 is that the citric elements in the wines (floral tones, fruit flavors or zest or peel influences) are more orange than lemon or grapefruit this year, which I often take as a sign that the wines will come forward and start to drink beautifully without long bottle aging and offer up plenty of fireworks in the not too distant future.

2017 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Bourgogne Aligoté from Monsieur Ente is again absolutely superb and about as good an example as one can find from this varietal. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of apple, a touch of quince, bee pollen, wet stone minerality and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is fullish, ripe and pure, with a very good core for this grape, lovely focus and balance, bright acids and a long, complex and quite elegant finish. Fine juice. 2018-2035. **90.**

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Bourgogne *blanc* from Domaine Ente is a beautiful wine in the making, with a bit more power and mid-palate stuffing this year than is customary, which I assume is representative of it being brought in towards the end of the harvest, as there was not severe frost damage in these vines in 2016 (as they are located in Puligny). The bouquet is a fine mix of pear, apple, citrus blossoms, chalky soil tones, a hint of almond and a nice touch of orange zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and impressively solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, excellent balance and a long, racy and very well balanced finish. This is still fairly primary and will age very well indeed- particularly for Bourgogne! 2018-2035+. **90.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Meursault *villages* from the Ente family is also lovely this year, and like the Bourgogne *blanc*, it is characterized by a bit more mid-palate amplitude in this vintage than is typical of this bottling. The nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of apple, passion fruit, hazelnuts, iodine, chalky minerality and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely mineral in profile, with very good concentration at the core, bright acids and a very long, nascently complex and energetic finish. This is a fine bottle in the making, but it will need at least a couple of years in the cellar to properly blossom before starting to drink with generosity. 2020-2040+. **91.**

2017 Meursault “Clos des Ambres”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Arnaud Ente’s 2017 Clos des Ambres is a beautiful wine in the making, with a very refined profile on both the nose and palate and excellent structure for aging. The bouquet is pure and very classy, offering up scents of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a touch of iodine, a beautiful base of soil, discreet vanillin oak and a topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with lovely complexity, a fine core, impeccable balance and a long, focused and beautifully vibrant finish. This is a superb bottle of Meursault in the making. 2022-2045+. **92.**



Arnaud Ente and his son sampling the 2017 Referts in the domaine's tasting room in Meursault.

2017 Meursault “Petits Charrons”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

I was wondering how the 2017 Petits Charrons would show this year, as this was one of the hardest hit parcels in Monsieur Ente's lineup by the frost damage of 2016. However, the 2017 shows no ill effects from its frosting last year and the wine is absolutely brilliant in all respects. The stunning bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of apple, tangerine, hazelnut, iodine, a complex base of chalky soil tones, orange blossoms, a discreet base of vanillin oak and a lovely, esthery topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very racy, with superb core of fruit, bright acids, outstanding soil signature and a very, very long, very refined and vibrant finish. This wine has been raised exclusively in six hundred liter *demi-muids* now for three vintages and this gives the wine very delicate oak tones and truly stellar mineral precision. The 2017 is stunning. 2020-2045+. **93+**.

2017 Meursault “la Sève du Clos”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 old vine bottling of la Sève du Clos is truly brilliant wine as well, with the depth, complexity and inherent elegance one usually finds only in top grand crus or the very finest renditions of the very finest premier cru *terroirs*. The bouquet is stunning, delivering a constellation of passion fruit, pear, hazelnut, iodine, a very complex base of minerality, beautiful floral tones and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite primary, with a bottomless core of fruit, racy acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, zesty,

nascently complex and thrilling finish. The 2017 la Sève du Clos has stunning depth, but is remarkably light on its feet and ethereal at the same time. 2022-2050+. **95.**

2017 Meursault “la Goutte d’Or”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Goutte d’Or is one of the most powerful wines in the cellar this year, but at the same time, it is very much cut from the Domaine Ente stylistic cloth and is racy, elegant and very pure as well. The nose is pure and complex, wafting from the glass in a magical blend of apple, pear, almond, gorgeous floral tones, bee pollen, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and concentrated at the core, with laser-like focus, great elegance and cut, outstanding complexity and a very, very long, pure and dazzling finish. An utterly brilliant wine in the making. 2024-2060. **95+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Puligny “Referts” from Domaine Ente is also an outstanding wine in the making, and with little or no frost damage here in 2016, this wine is utterly classical in size and shape this year. The gorgeous nose offers up a youthful blend of apple, tangerine, chalky minerality, loads of citrus zest, vanillin oak and a musky floral topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite primary, with a lovely core, good, tensile acidity, excellent focus and backend mineral drive and a very long, poised and vibrant finish. Excellent juice. 2022-2055. **93+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Champ Gains from Monsieur Ente is another beautiful wine in the making. Like the Referts this year, the Champ Gains is utterly classical in style and proportion, offering up a lovely bouquet of white peach, apple, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, white lilies and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very refined in personality, with excellent soil signature, a very good core of pure fruit, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. Just beautiful Puligny. 2022-2055+. **94.**

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Arnaud Ente is an excellent example. The bouquet is bright and very red fruit this year, delivering scents of strawberries, cherries, bonfire, a nice touch of soil, fresh thyme and a gentle topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is medium-full, long and tangy, with beautiful transparency, just a hint of backend tannin and very good length and grip. Good juice. 2020-2040. **90+.**

2017 Volnay “Santenots”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2017 Santenots from Monsieur Ente has turned out beautifully and this may well be even a hair better than the outstanding wine he produced here in 2016! The bouquet is deep, pure and marvelously red fruity, jumping from the glass in a blaze of cherries, raspberries, a very complex base of soil, gamebird, a touch of spice from some whole clusters and a very discreet base of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, complex and vibrant finish. This is one beautiful bottle of Volnay in the making! 2025-2065+. **93+.**

Domaine François et Antoine Jobard (Meursault)

Antoine Jobard has made a lovely set of wines in 2017. He was not able to escape completely the frost threat in the spring of 2017, as their parcel of vines in the Saint Aubin premier cru of Sur le Sentier du Clous was hit and they lost thirty percent of their normal crop in this climat in 2017. But, everything else was spared and the yields are quite normal for all the other wines here in the 2017 vintage, which is a nice change from the small cropload here the

year before. Antoine and his picking team were out in the vines out August 28th in 2017 to retain cut and acidity in their wines and they have succeeded beautifully in this regard. The entire cellar had already been racked a few months prior to my visit and the 2017s were absolutely singing here in early November. There is a touch of stylistic variation between different Jobard bottlings this year, with some of the villages level wines showing a bit more plumpness and powerful personalities in 2017 than in most years (the Saint Aubin “Sur le Sentier du Clou and Puligny “Trézin” fall into this category), while wines such as the Meursault En la Barre are racy and very classical in proportions. When one moves up to the premier cru level chez Jobard, the 2017s are far more classically proportioned and nicely tensile out of the blocks, so one infers that the premier crus were picked first when the domaine got rolling with the harvest, so that they could retain their more classical cut and mineral drive, while some of the villages level parcels were brought in a bit later and are a bit more generously fruit-driven this year as a result. But, there is nothing here, in either style, that will disappoint, as these are excellent 2017s.

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Bourgogne *blanc* from Domaine Jobard is very fine this year, offering up a lovely nose of apple, pear, a touch of hazelnut, chalky soil tones and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is crisp, fullish and impressively long on the backend, with a solid core and lovely tension and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is impressive. 2018-2033+. **89.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Meursault AC from Antoine Jobard is nicely reserved on the nose and palate right now, which I take as a very good sign. With a bit of coaxing, the bouquet reveals scents of apple, tangerine, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, a dollop of vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, fullish and nicely succulent on the attack, with a good core, sound underlying soil tones and a long, energetic and promising finish. This will want a few years' worth of bottle age to blossom properly, but will be just fine. 2021-2040+. **90.**

2017 Meursault “En la Barre”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

As is often the case here, the 2017 En la Barre from Domaine Jobard is a step up from their very pretty Meursault AC bottling, with a bit more mineral definition and even better structure. The bouquet is first rate, offering up an already quite complex blend of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a touch of iodine, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a bit of geranium in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely plump at the core, with good mineral drive, bright acids and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2021-2045+. **91.**

2017 Meursault “Tillets”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Tillels from Monsieur Jobard is also excellent and was quite wide open and giving at the time of my visit. The bouquet delivers a blend of apple, orange zest, a hint of the butter to come, chalky soil tones, iodine, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite succulent at the core, with good acids and a long, inviting finish. This is very good as well, but I have a tiny preference for the slightly leaner and more mineral En la Barre this year. 2022-2050. **90+.**

2017 St. Aubin “Sur le Sentier du Clou”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 version of Sur le Sentier du Clou is quite powerful in style this year from the thirty percent reduction in yields, due to the frosts. The wine offers up a very pretty bouquet of apple, pear, almond, spring flowers, chalky soil tones, orange zest and a touch of *crème*

patissière in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe and quite broad-shouldered for this bottling, with a rock solid core of fruit, zesty acids, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. This is not classically proportioned, but it is very satisfying in its more powerful guise. 2021-2045. **91.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Trézin”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Puligny “Trézin” is also a bit bigger in profile than is customary in this vintage, but pure, zesty and energetic as well on the backend. The expressive bouquet offers up scents of pear, tangerine, almond, a fine base of chalky soil tones, and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and again, quite broad-shouldered for this bottling, with fine mid-palate depth, lovely focus and excellent backend cut and grip on the well-balanced and succulent finish. Like the Saint Aubin, this is not archetypical Trézin this year, but it is a superb wine. 2018-2040+. **91.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Gains”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Champs Gains from Antoine Jobard is an excellent young wine. The bouquet is pure and properly reserved in profile out of the blocks, delivering scents of apple, white peach, a touch of fresh almond, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms, a dollop of iodine and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a fine core, excellent focus and grip, a zesty girdle of acidity and a long, vibrant and very promising finish. Fine juice. 2023-2050. **92+.**

2017 Meursault “Blagny”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Meursault “Blagny” is also a fine bottle in the making. The bouquet is deep and utterly classic, offering up scents of apple, pear, hazelnut, a lovely base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a fine floral topnote gently reminiscent of geraniums. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, impressive cut and soil signature and a long, powerful and complex finish. Blagny is never one of the more delicate premier crus in style, but always a good, sturdy example of Meursault and this is certainly the case with this fine bottle from Antoine Jobard in 2017. 2023-2050. **92+.**

2017 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2017 Charmes from Domaine Jobard is outstanding. The beautiful bouquet offers up a ripe and refined blend of pear, passion fruit, a hint of fresh coconut, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and very classy in personality, with a juicy core of fruit, excellent transparency and grip, bright acids and impressive cut and focus on the long and complex finish. This will drink with great style a few years earlier than either the Blagny or Champs Gains, but last every bit as long in bottle. Great Charmes. 2020-2050. **94.**

2017 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

Antoine Jobard’s 2017 Poruzots is absolutely superb and offers up a very classically structured, nicely reserved profile out of the blocks. The aromatic constellation here is superb, offering up scents of pear, passion fruit, almond, a touch of iodine, a very complex base of soil, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very long, with a rock solid core, great mineral drive, bright, snappy acids and a very, very long, complex and classy finish. Great juice. 2024-2050. **94.**

2017 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The Genevrières is always the most elegant wine in the Jobard cellars and the beautiful 2017 version is no exception. The refined bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, passion fruit, hazelnuts, salty limestone soil, a touch of iodine and a deft framing of vanillin oak.

On the palate the wine is pure, elegant and beautifully balanced, with a lovely core of fruit, stunning transparency and grip, bright, racy acids and a very long, very suave and complex finish. Archetypical Genevrières and a great bottle. 2022-2050. 94+.



Domaine des Comtes Lafon (Meursault)

Dominique Lafon is very happy with how the 2017 vintage has turned out, with both his reds and his whites “very classical in style” and destined to provide plenty of pleasure over the coming years. As he noted, bales of hay were burned in Meursault by the vignerons in late April to ward off the potential frost damage and yields were consequently protected. It was nice to walk around in the cellars in Meursault and see a “normal” number of casks of the 2017s, and an equally correct crop size of 2018s as well, the Comtes Lafon cellars have been rather empty of barrels for the last several vintages. Dominique and his picking crew started harvesting the white wines in the Côte de Beaune on August 28th and were at work bringing in the pinot noir grapes starting on September 4th, when they descended upon the domaine’s parcel in the Clos des Chênes. Everything was gathered before the rainy weekend of the 9th and 10th of September. The reds from 2017 were all showing very well indeed at the time of my visit, without perhaps the really sappy element in their central cores that one could find in some cellars, but a beautiful synthesis of very precise and pure soil signatures and pristinely ripe fruit tones. The white wines have the cut, energy and mineral drive of the very best white wines of the vintage, with the

possible exception of the Montrachet itself, which was the most severely frost-damaged parcel here in the 2016 vintage. Perhaps these vines just needed more than a year to recover completely from the freeze and did not perform quite up to the same level as the premier crus in the Lafon vineyard patrimony? Do not get me wrong, it is a very, very good bottle of Montrachet, but it seemed to lack just a bit of the core conviction and stunning backend energy of the top premier crus in the cellar this year. Maybe this was just a stage the wine was in? In any case, the overall lineup of 2017s from Dominique Lafon is simply outstanding in this vintage and no one is going to be disappointed with any bottle that they are lucky enough to come across in the market. Most of the wines were still in cask at the time of my mid-November visit, with the exception of the Monthélie rouge, the Meursault AC, Désirée and Bouchères, all of which had already been assembled in stainless steel and were in preparation for bottling in the near future.

Côte de Beaune Rouges

2017 Monthélie “les Duresses” Rouge- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Monthélie “les Duresses” had already been assembled in tank back at the end of September and was to be bottled a few weeks after my visit. The wine is quite lovely this year, offering up a pure and classy bouquet of red and black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a touch of vanillin oak and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very nicely transparent this year, with a solid core of fruit, moderate tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and bouncy finish. Good juice that will drink beautifully with only a couple of years in the cellar. 2021-2045+. **90.**

2017 Volnay- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The Comtes Lafon Volnay *villages* cuvée is always a lovely bottle for mid-term consumption and it was nice to see it back in the lineup again in this vintage, after not being produced last year, due to the very short crop. The backbone of this bottling are the relatively younger vines in Champans, as with a normal crop again in 2017, Dominique Lafon was able to bottle the ninety-eight year-old vines in Champans on their own this year. The 2017 Volnay AC offers up a fine, black fruity nose of sweet dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, a bit of cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with a touch of ripe tannin and good length and grip on the well-balanced and promising finish. This is a very good AC. 2024-2060. **90+.**

2017 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Clos des Chênes *chez* Lafon is an excellent wine in the making, offering up a refined and nicely red fruity bouquet of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of soil tones, cedar and woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely structured, with a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, refined and complex finish. 2027-2065. **92.**

2017 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

I was expecting perhaps just a bit more mid-palate sappiness with the very old vines in Champans on their own in 2017, but perhaps they were still feeling some ill effects from the severe frost of 2016 and needed a bit more time for complete recovery. This is not meant as a criticism, as this wine is excellent, but just not quite as sappy as I was anticipating. The nose is pure, complex and beautifully pure, wafting from the glass in a fine mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, lovely minerality, a touch of spice and a discreet framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and soil-driven, with a good core of

fruit, ripe, suave tannins and excellent backend energy and lift on the long and complex finish. A fine bottle. 2027-2065. **92+**.

2017 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Santenots du Milieu *chez* Lafon was the only wine that was a whisper grumpy at the time of my visit, as it was a touch reductive. But, with a bit of swirling, it opened up nicely to show scents of plums, pomegranate, black cherries, woodsmoke, fresh thyme, gamebird, espresso, a complex base of dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and quite soil-driven, with a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. This is going to be lovely and is quite reminiscent of the 1985 when it was young and I had the good fortune to drink it with a bit of regularity. 2026-2065. **92+**.

Côte de Beaune Blancs

2017 Meursault- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Meursault *villages* was already racked to tank, just prior to the start of harvest in 2018, and was destined for bottling in December. The wine is an excellent AC, offering up a precise and classy bouquet of apple, passion fruit, chalky soil tones, a hint of coconut, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and quite vibrant in personality, with a good core, superb focus and grip and a long, bouncy and nicely taught finish. Good juice. 2018-2040. **91**.

2017 Meursault “Désirée”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Meursault “Désirée” from Domaine Lafon is really pretty this year, with a nice touch of reserve to its personality that augurs very nicely for its future development in bottle. As I mentioned above, this too was already in tank. The bouquet is pure and refined, wafting from the glass in a mix of tangerine, pear, citrus blossoms, chalky soil tones, a touch of iodine and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and still youthful, with a good core, fine cut and grip and a long, nascently complex and promising finish. Give this just a year or two in the cellar to really let it blossom a bit more. 2020-2040. **91**.

2017 Meursault “Clos de la Barre”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Clos de la Barre has turned out beautifully and is destined to be one of the great recent vintages of this lovely cuvée. The aromatic constellation offers up scents of apple, pear, a nice touch of coconut, chalky minerality, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely defined by its underlying minerality, with a lovely core, plenty of bounce and grip and a long, perfectly balanced and complex backend. This was still in barrel. Fine, fine juice. 2021-2050. **92+**.

2017 Meursault “Bouchères”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Bouchères was the first vineyard picked in 2017, as the Lafon harvesting team was out here bringing in bunches on the morning of August 28th. IT was also already assembled in stainless steel tank at the time of my November visit. The wine is lovely this year, offering up a musky bouquet of apple, tangerine, passion fruit, chalky soil, hazelnuts, vanillin oak and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a good structural chassis, solid depth at the core and a long, racy and well-balanced finish that closes with good cut and grip. 2021-2050. **92**.

2017 Meursault “Goutte d’Or”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Goutte d’Or *chez* Lafon has to be the strongest vintage yet that I have tasted of this cuvée since the vines were replanted. The bouquet is pure, composed and absolutely classic, offering up scents of apple, pear, iodine, chalky soil elements, hazelnuts, spring flowers and

vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is refined, pure and full, with very good mid-palate depth, bright acids, lovely soil signature and a very long, very bouncy and vibrant finish. This has the race and grip that only the top domaines' white wines show in this vintage. 2021-2050. **93.**

2017 Meursault "Poruzots"- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Poruzots is excellent from Domaine Lafon, as this wine too has the outstanding structural integrity and racy acids of a great vintage. The aromatic constellation this year is superb, wafting from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, iodine, passion fruit, a complex base of limestone minerality, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and impressively bouncy with a great girdle of acidity. The core is just fine, the soil signature exemplary and the finish is long, complex and zesty. A gorgeous Poruzots! 2023-2055. **94.**

2017 Meursault "Genevrières"- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Lafon Genevrières is another absolute classic in the making. The bouquet is pure, complex and utterly refined, delivering scents of passion fruit, pear, apple, salty minerality, spring flowers, a touch of iodine and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very vibrant, with a lovely core of fruit, good mineral drive, bright acids and excellent cut and grip on the very long, complex and energetic finish. This is already starting to show just a hint of the butteriness that will come with age. A very, very elegant and classy example of Genevrières. 2021-2055. **94+.**

2017 Meursault "Charmes"- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Interestingly, as the Lafon parcel in Charmes was not frosted in 2016, there was higher production here last year than was the case in 2017. In this most recent vintage, there are only twenty barrels of Charmes, whereas last year there were thirty-five! The smaller crop was due to imperfect weather at flowering in 2017, but the resulting wine has turned out brilliantly and this is one of the best recent vintages of Charmes from Dominique Lafon! The bouquet is pure and complex, hopping from the glass in a fine blend of apple pear, coconut, chalky minerality, hazelnuts, a touch of iodine and a lovely base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, long and very, very precise, with lovely mid-palate depth, bright, racy acids and fine cut and mineral drive on the very long and complex finish. Great juice. 2021-2055. **94+.**

2017 Meursault "Perrières"- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2017 Perrières is my favorite wine in the cellars this year. The bouquet is pure and properly reserved out of the blocks, offering up a youthful blend of apple, pear, passion fruit, very stony minerality, fresh almond, a bit of citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and rock solid at the core, with a great girdle of acidity, laser-like focus and a very long, very mineral and complex finish. This will need bottle age before it really delivers on its superb potential, but with patience, this is going to be a dynamite bottle of Perrières. 2025-2065. **97.**

2017 Montrachet- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

I did not mean my introductory remarks to be construed as criticism for this vintage of Lafon Montrachet, as the wine is beautiful in 2017. But, it is not its customary step up from the Perrières this year, which may be more a reflection of just how brilliant the Perrières has turned out in 2017, rather than commentary on the Montrachet. In any case, the bouquet here is stellar, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of apple pear, fresh almond, complex, chalky soil tones, a touch of iodine, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very refined structurally, with a good core, fine focus and grip, bright acids and a long, elegant and complex finish. A lovely, lovely wine, but given all the fireworks at the

premier cru level this year in the Lafon cellars, I was hoping for just a tiny bit more with the Monty. 2025-2065. **96.**

Domaine Guy Roulot (Meursault)

I arrived to taste at Domaine Guy Roulot fairly early in my trip and perhaps I caught the wines still in a bit of an awkward stage, as the whole range was not quite showing up to my (admittedly quite high) expectations. As is the custom chez Roulot, the entire cellar of 2017s had been racked into stainless steel tanks at the end of August of 2018 in anticipation of bottling a few months after Christmas. The team here started picking in 2017 on August 27th to preserve cut, grip and mineral drive in the wines, and for several of the cuvées, this was very much in evidence. However, a few other wines seemed to be showing a bit soft and laidback structurally at the time of my visit, perhaps echoing more generous yields in 2017 from climats that had been the most severely frosted the previous year. In 2016, the only parcel of vines owned by the domaine that had not been frosted was their Perrières, so everything else had to deal with a bit of pent up energy in the vines when 2017 came along, so maybe this was a contributory factor in how easy-going some wines were showing? On the other hand, it may just be that the wines had not sharpened up yet from their six months that they will spend in tank (which is the nice effect of Jean-Marc Roulot's technique of ten months in barrel and a finishing stretch in stainless steel tanks), and I just caught the wines ahead of schedule and did not find the customary cut and snap here with some of the 2017s as a result of my timing. We will see in the coming months, and given the absolutely exceptional track record here in the last couple of decades, it is hard not to assume that the wines will show more tensile Roulot personality prior to their bottling. Domaine Roulot did not entirely escape frost damage in 2017, as there was a touch in their Bourgogne blanc vineyards on the flats of Meursault, but everything else was spared. I was happy to see that the 2017s here were in a far less reductive stage at this point in their evolutions than was customary here four or five vintages ago, and I took this to be a sign that the domaine is reining this in a bit. I have had recently a bottle of one of the Roulot lieux à dit wines from 2004 that had seemingly gotten stuck in its reductive state and had not developed at all with bottle age. Better than premox for sure, but also an exchange of one problem for another. But, the 2017s this November were far less reductive than would have been the case back in that timeframe and I suspect that the domaine has also noticed some bottles staying a bit too reductive and not developing optimally.

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Jean-Marc Roulot

As I mentioned, there was just a bit of frost damage here this year. The 2017 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.**

2017 Auxey-Duresses Blanc- Domaine Guy Roulot

Domaine Roulot has only been producing this bottling since the 2010 vintage and I assume this is from some of their vineyards that they switched over from pinot noir to chardonnay at that time. It is a very good value in the stable and the 2017 will not disappoint, as it offers up a very pretty nose of pear, apple, sweet almond, chalky soil tones, white lilies and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full, ripe and complex, with a good core, again, quite sound framing acids and good length and grip on the ready to drink finish. Good juice and a step up in complexity and class from the Bourgogne. 2018-2033. **89+.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine Guy Roulot

The *villages* level Meursault from Domaine Roulot in 2017 is a very good and easy-going wine structurally that will be at its best early on in its lifetime. The bouquet offers up a stylish mix of apple, pear, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a bit of geranium in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe in personality and wide open, with a good core, supporting acids and a tasty, long and fairly broad-shouldered finish. I have to assume that these vineyards were the last to be picked *chez* Roulot and the wine is a bit easy-going as a result, though still quite tasty. 2018-2035. **89+**.

2017 Meursault “Vireuils”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Meursault “Vireuils” from Domaine Guy Roulot was also showing fairly forward in personality at the time of my visit. The bouquet is ripe, nutty and very classy in its blend of apple, hazelnut, a touch of iodine, limestone soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely concentrated in the mid-palate, with a still fairly primary flavor profile, sound acids and a nice touch of citrus peel on the long finish that suggests there is more to come here with a bit of bottle age. However, at least at this point in the wine’s evolution, this too looks like a 2017 that will be best in its earlier days. 2018-2035+. **90**.

2017 Meursault “Meix Chavaux”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Meix Chavaux from Domaine Roulot has a bit more cut and grip than the very pretty Vireuils this year, and lands a bit higher up on my register as a result. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy mix of pear, tangerine, a touch of iodine, lovely soil tones, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively detailed, with a good core of fruit, bright acids and fine length and grip on the ripe, but classical finish. This is still showing fairly forward in the context of a young Roulot wine, but there is some real cut and grip on the backend. 2018-2040+. **91+**.

2017 Meursault “Luchets”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Luchets *chez* Roulot was showing very nicely at the time of my visit, sharing more structural snap with the very good Meix Chavaux. The nose delivers a fine constellation of pear, apple, hazelnut, spring flowers, chalky minerality, vanillin oak and a nice dollop of orange zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with lovely backend mineral drive, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the poised and well-balanced finish. 2018-2040+. **92**.

2017 Meursault “Tessons” Cuvée Mon Plaisir- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Tessons is a fairly ripe example of the vintage, but not without good underlying *terroir* signature and cut and grip on the backend. The bouquet is quite beautiful already, wafting from the glass is a composed arrangement of apple, a touch of clementine, lime blossoms, lovely minerality, almond, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and complex, with a superb core of fruit, very good soil signature, good acids and a nice touch of reserve on the long and complex finish. Good juice. 2019-2045. **92+**.

2017 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The domaine’s bottling of Poruzots has changed a bit this year, as the wine is now produced entirely from their parcel of vines in the lower section of the vineyard (*Dessous*), as their oldest vines in the upper part of *Dessus* had to be pulled up and replanted after 2016. The wine is very nice in 2017, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of almond, pear, apple, a nice touch of early *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with very good bounce and complexity on the backend. The finish is long, nicely framed by juicy acids and wide open already. Perhaps it will

close up a bit with further time in tank and after its *mise*, but right now, it seems likely to turn heads right from its moment of release. Good juice, but not quite as racy and reserved as I would optimally like to see. 2018-2045. **92+**.



2017 Meursault “Clos des Bouchères”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Clos des Bouchères from Domaine Roulot was showing very well indeed at the time of my visit, with more cut and grip than the very pretty Poruzots at the present time. The bouquet is ripe and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, an exotic hint of guava, fine minerality, fresh almond, vanillin oak and a musky floral topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and has fine mid-palate depth, with bright acids, fine focus and balance and a long, vibrant and classy finish. This is very good in 2017. 2018-2045+. **93.**

2017 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine Guy Roulot

These are the oldest vines that the domaine owns, as they were planted by Jean-Marc’s grandfather in the 1940s. The wine was showing very nicely from the 2017 vintage, delivering a fine nose of pear, apple, orange blossoms, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones that had a nice touch of salinity to them this year and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with a good core, fine focus and grip, bright acids and a long, balanced and vibrant finish. This is very tasty. 2020-2050. **93+.**

2017 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine Guy Roulot

The 2017 Perrières *chez* Roulot is outstanding. Without any frost damage here in 2016, the potential yields here were quite correct in 2017 and the wine is every bit a classic in the making. The first class bouquet delivers scents of apple, tangerine, pear, almond, a complex base of minerality, vanillin oak and a very pretty topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine sense of reserve at the core, excellent acidity for the vintage, very good grip and a long, vibrant and energetic finish. Fine, fine juice. 2022-2050. **95.**

Puligny-Montrachet

Domaine Jacques Carillon (Puligny-Montrachet)

Jacques Carillon was quite content with the style and quality of his 2017s, but he feels this is again going to be a vintage that drinks well on the early side and he anticipates that the 2017s will reach their apogees ahead of his 2016s. His yields were much better in his villages level vineyards in 2017 than was the case the previous year, as he had some frost on the flatter AC vineyard parcels, but his premier crus in 2017 are actually produced from shorter yields than was the case the year before. If you recall, the frost of 2016 hit the villages level holdings and the grand crus primarily in the village of Puligny, with most of the premier crus escaping Mother Nature's wrath in that year. His smaller premier cru crop was due to a short period of flowering and very dry conditions during these critical handful of days in June. Monsieur Carillon began picking on September 1st in 2017, not wishing to let the wines get top heavy after the heat spike pushed the sugars briskly north towards the end of August. There is a new wine in the cellars in 2017, which is a Chassagne-Montrachet villages bottling. The domaine had planted this parcel over to chardonnay in 2013 and had a tiny bit of production in 2015, but the parcel was completely lost to frost in 2016 and the 2017 vintage will be the first where the wine is actually commercialized. While the villages level Chassagne is a new addition to Monsieur Carillon's lineup, the 2017 vintage will also be the last for another bottling here, as his parcel of vines in the Chassagne premier cru of Macherelles will be going to his brother François Carillon beginning in the 2018 vintage.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

Monsieur Carillon's 2017 Puligny AC is once again a lovely *villages*, offering up a bright and classy bouquet of pear, white peach, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, vanillin oak and a fine topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and generously endowed at the core, with lovely cut and grip, bright acids and fine focus and balance on the long and succulent finish. This is superb AC and will want a few years in the cellar to blossom. 2021-2045+. **91+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2017 Chassagne AC is a very good wine, though as it is younger vines, it is more fruit-driven in personality than the Puligny AC in this vintage. The nose is bright and attractive, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, peach, a fine base of soil, just a dollop of orange zest and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and juicy on the attack, with a good, round core of fruit, sound framing acids and fine focus on the long and bouncy finish. This will be accessible right from the start and will offer up plenty of early drinking pleasure, but will not last quite as long as the Puligny *villages*. 2018-2035. **89+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet "les Macherelles"- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The last vintage of Jacques Carillon's Macherelles is one of his finest ever and this wine will be well worth a special search. The bouquet is very refined and nascently complex,

delivering a fine constellation of apple, tangerine, complex minerality, citrus blossoms, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and succulent, with a very good core, excellent backend mineral drive, very good cut and grip and a long, vibrant and perfectly balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2021-2050. **92.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Canet”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2017 Champs Canet *chez* Carillon is outstanding on both the nose and palate. The pure and youthfully complex nose delivers a refined blend of apple, pear, tangerine, citrus zest, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very precise on the attack, with a fine core, excellent focus and bounce, zesty acids and a very long, soil-driven and classic finish. This is really lovely and will be a very elegant example of Champs Canet when it is fully mature. 2022-2060. **93.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières” - Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2017 Perrières from Jacques Carillon is a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the Champs Canet, but everything here seems just a touch more precise and pure as well and in due course, this is going to be even a shade better. The bouquet delivers a fine, fairly primary blend of apple, white peach, a hint of pink grapefruit, chalky minerality, vanillin oak and a youthful topnote of lemon peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and tightly-knit, with a superb core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, bright, snappy acids and excellent cut and grip on the long and beautifully balanced finish. 2023-2060. **93+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2017 Referts *chez* Carillon is nicely structured as well and is showing superb potential, but it will not be one of those early-drinking Puligny premier crus in this vintage. The nose is refined and very promising, but still quite young, as it delivers a fine blend of apple, white peach, a touch of citrus zest, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb focus and grip, bright acids, lovely minerality and a very long, poised and nascently complex finish. This is high class juice. 2024-2060+. **94.**

2017 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

Monsieur Carillon’s 2017 Bienvenues is once again one of the very finest white wines that I tasted during my November trip, but this seems to be the case almost every years! The deep, youthful and serious bouquet offers up scents of pear, apple, orange zest, kaleidoscopic limestone minerality, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and racy, with a full-bodied and very zesty format, lovely mid-palate concentration, snappy acids and great purity and precision on the very, very long, very promising finish. Just a beautiful wine in the making! 2027-2075. **96+.**

Domaine Jean Chartron (Puligny-Montrachet)

Jean-Michel Chartron has made excellent wines in 2017. He began picking on August 28th and has not allowed the heat spike of late August to push the vintage in a more blowsy direction and has retained beautifully acidity in his wines. As is often the case here in November. A few of the wines had already been bottled prior to the harvest of 2018, while most others were now racked into stainless steel tanks for assemblage and preparation for bottling in the spring. All of the wines in tank had been fined on October 16th, so they were starting to bounce back nicely from this by the time of my visit on November 6th. Only the grand crus were still in cask when I stopped by to sample the new vintage chez Chartron. It was great to see the full roster of wines on display in 2017, as the frost damage of the previous year had eliminated several cuvées

from the lineup, due to such a short crop in certain villages that were the most severely frosted. As I mentioned last year, the domaine's excellent holdings in the premier cru of Caillerets in Chassagne-Montrachet had to be replanted after the 2016 harvest, so we will not see this bottling back in the domaine's lineup until 2021. Domaine Chartron was another of those cellars in Puligny-Montrachet that I visited where I had the impression that the sweet spot of the vintage is with the premier crus (and the glorious Chevalier-Montrachet) and that there seemed to be more cut and racy purity in the top handful of premier crus here than was the case with some of the grand crus. As the grand crus were the one that received the brunt of the frost damage the year before, this probably makes sense, as the vines were still in a bit of recovery mode the following year. It is not that the grand crus chez Chartron are disappointing at all in 2017- far from it- but what I love best about the very top 2017 white Burgundies was more in evidence in the stunning lineup of premier crus here this year than was the case with the Corton-Charlemagne, Bâtard-Montrachet or Montrachet. The latter three wines are all excellent, but twenty years down the road, we are still going to be talking reverentially about the brilliant Clos de la Pucelles and Clos des Caillerets bottlings of 2017 and probably not those three grand crus!

2017 Bourgogne Blanc “Clos de la Combe”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Domaine Chartron Bourgogne *blanc* had been bottled at the end of August of 2018 and was showing very nicely during the first week of November. The wine has a nice touch of reserve in its aromatic profile, offering up scents of white peach, a touch of crab apple, chalky soil tones, lime zest and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and nicely balanced, with solid depth at the core and good cut on the long finish. Quite tasty. 2018-2030. **87+**.

2017 Haute Côtes de Beaune Blanc “En Bois Guilleman”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel's 2017 Haute Côtes de Beaune *blanc* was also already in bottle and was showing very well indeed, delivering a fine bouquet of apple, lemon, chalky minerality, a bit of vanillin oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and quite elegant in profile, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, nicely complex finish. This has a touch more mid-palate depth and soil signature than the straight Bourgogne *blanc*. 2018-2032. **89**.

2017 Santenay “Champs Perrier”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron's lovely Santenay *blanc* is made from purchased grapes, which he sources from two different producers. There are five casks of this wine in 2017 and it will be an excellent value. The nose wafts from the glass in a ripe and very stylish blend of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, a touch of tangerine and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely succulent on the attack, with a good core, a wide open personality, solid framing acids and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is will drink well from release. 2018-2030. **89+**.

2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Pimentiers” Blanc- Domaine Jean Chartron

I tasted some really superb examples of 2017 Savigny-lès-Beaune *blanc* during my three weeks in Burgundy in November and Jean-Michel Chartron's version was certainly one of the top. The bouquet offers up a bright and zesty mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, lime peel a touch of beeswax and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and shows off excellent backend mineral drive, with fine focus and cut and a long, vibrant and complex finish. This is another superb bargain in the Chartron lineup of 2017s. 2018-2035. **90+**.

2017 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Belles Filles”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The Pernand-Vergelesses *blanc* was one of the wines not produced in 2016 *chez* Chartron and I was happy to see it back in its customary place in this vintage. The wine is very pretty and stylish on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and has a nice touch of stylistic reserve to it today, with a good core, fine soil signature and lovely focus and grip on the long finish. This is not quite as complex out of the blocks as the Savigny *blanc*, but that may come with a bit of bottle age. 2019-2035. **89+**.

2017 Meursault “les Pierres”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron’s “les Pierres” cuvée of Meursault AC is composed of a mix of Narvaux and Tillets fruit. The wine was showing very nicely in the 2017 vintage, offering up a forward and succulent personality on both the nose and palate. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, almond, white flowers, vanillin oak and a good base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows fine mid-palate depth, with sound framing acids and good length on the finish. This will make friends early, but has the balance to also keep quite nicely. 2018-2040. **90**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Benoités”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Benoités” from Domaine Jean Chartron is also a very strong village wine, with just a touch more complexity in evidence than in the very good Meursault AC. The nose is pure and expressive, delivering a mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, *crème patissière*, vanillin oak and a lovely, floral topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely succulent at the core, with fine purity and soil signature, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. Good juice. 2018-2040. **90+**.

2017 St. Aubin “Perrières”- Domaine Jean Chartron

In the 2016 vintage, the Perrières vineyard was the far more heavily-damaged parcels in St. Aubin from Jean-Michel, and I was very happy to see the wine showing so beautifully this year. The nose is pure and complex, jumping from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, pastry cream, lovely limestone minerality, a touch of fresh almond, vanillin oak and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and very refined, with a fine core, lovely balance and grip and a long, focused and classy finish. 2018-2045+. **91+**.

2017 St. Aubin “Murgers des Dents de Chien”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Murgers des Dents de Chien from Domaine Chartron is outstanding and was really singing at the time of my November visit. The bouquet delivers lovely purity and complexity in its blend of pear, white peach, *crème patissière*, a complex base of chalky soil tones, bee pollen, almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a touch more reserved in personality than the Perrières, with a superb core of fruit, fine soil inflection and a long, zesty and very promising finish. Excellent juice. 2021-2045+. **92**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Puligny *villages* was a bit more reticent at the time of my visit, but with a bit of coaxing delivers scents of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, vanillin oak and a hint of the *crème patissière* to come with a bit of bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite a bit more open than the nose suggests, with plenty of depth and charm, good soil signature, bright acids and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced finish. A fine example. 2021-2045. **91**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron's 2017 Folatières is an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet delivers a fine aromatic constellation of apple, white peach, spring flowers, *crème patissière*, a refined base of limestone minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and pure, with a lovely core of fruit, simply superb mineral drive (particularly for Folatières) and excellent cut and grip on the long, very well balanced and complex finish. First class juice. 2022-2055+. **92+**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Pucelle” Cuvée Centenaire- Dom. Jean Chartron

2017 is the hundredth vintage of Clos de la Pucelle for the Chartron family and Jean-Michel has produced a special cuvée to commemorate this historical vintage. The wine is absolutely stellar on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up a supremely refined blend of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of citrus zest, vanillin oak and a beautiful topnote of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and supremely elegant in profile, with a fine core, excellent transparency, bright, zesty acids and great cut and grip on the very long and classy finish. A great bottle in the making. 2025-2065+. **94.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos des Caillerets”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Despite being hit by frost in 2016, the new vintage of Clos des Caillerets from Domaine Chartron is outstanding and shows no ill effects from last year's freeze. The bouquet is superb, offering up stunning depth and nascent complexity in its mix of apple, pear, a touch of orange zest, complex, limestone minerality, a hint of fresh almond and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a great core of fruit, stellar mineral drive, bright, racy acids and laser-like focus on the very long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. An outstanding wine in every respect. 2025-2065. **94+**.

2017 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Jean Chartron

I like Jean-Michel Chartron's 2017 Corton-Charlemagne quite well this year, but it cannot quite keep pace with the stunning quality of the previous two premier crus. The bouquet is pure and has a nice touch of reserve to it in 2017, offering up scents of apple, pear, a touch of passion fruit, chalky minerality, fresh almond, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with good focus and cut, racy acids and a long, nascently complex and promising finish. This is going to be very, very good. 2022-2055+. **93.**

2017 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Jean Chartron is quite a bit riper in personality than the Corton Charlie, offering up a touch of the exotic in its bouquet of tangerine, pear, passion fruit, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerful in profile, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and broad-shouldered finish. This is a very good wine in the making, but stylistically, its muscular personality does not grab my attention the same way the profoundly elegant profile of the Clos des Caillerets does in this vintage. I should mention that these grapes were picked on September 9th (Jean-Michel trades grapes from Chevalier for these Bâtard grapes and another *vigneron* farms these vines), whereas the grapes for the domaine's Chevalier were harvested on the 2nd of the month. 2022-2055+. **93.**

2017 Chevalier-Montrachet “Clos des Chevaliers”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron's 2017 Clos des Chevaliers was one of the most stunning examples of the vintage that I tasted during my three weeks in the region. The bouquet is deep, pure and

shows beautiful intensity of flavor in its constellation of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, fresh almond, a magically complex base of chalky minerality, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very, very refined, with a lovely core of fruit, superb soil inflection, racy acids and outstanding length and grip on the gorgeous finish. This is quite ripe in 2017, coming in at 13.6 percent natural alcohol in this vintage, but is seamlessly balanced and shows no signs of pushing the envelope. A great, great bottle of Chevalier in the making. 2025-2075. **96.**

2017 Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Montrachet from Monsieur Chartron is also quite ripe and shows a touch of exotica in its aromatic blend of fresh pineapple, pear, apple, chalky soil tones, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and complex, with a plump core, very good acidity and grip, fine focus and a long, vibrant and classy finish. This is very, very good juice in the making. 2023-2065. **94.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos des Caillerets” Rouge- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2017 Clos des Caillerets *rouge* bottling from Jean-Michel is really lovely this year. The bouquet is pure, red fruity and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, strawberries, very chalky soil tones, gamebird, a touch of fresh thyme, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and beautifully transparent in personality, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long, poised and tangy finish. Fine juice. 2027-2065. **92.**

Domaine Leflaive (Puligny-Montrachet)

After the struggles with frost in 2016, particularly in Domaine Leflaive’s superb grand cru holdings, Cellar Master, Pierre Vincent, was in a much better mood this year, with a cellar properly full of casks of the 2017s. Though the domaine was generally able to avoid frost damage in late April of 2017, one of their bottlings was cut back by the cold snap, as the low lying Bourgogne Blanc parcels were mildly frosted again this year. But, everything else was spared and happily, there will be some wine to go around to the domaine’s loyal (and generally thirsty after the extreme shortage of grand crus in 2016) clientele when the 2017s are released. Recall that in 2016, the grand crus were the primary victims of the frost damage and most of the other vineyards here were spared and had normal crop levels, so there was not the same pent up energy in 2017 in the villages Puligny and the premier crus. Monsieur Vincent and his team were out in the vines by the 29th of August to start picking in 2017, seeking to retain cut and mineral drive in the wake of the heat spike the week before. The last grapes here were brought in by the 3rd of September, with sugar levels that were excellent, offering potential natural alcohols between 12.5 and 13 percent. As is customary here, the wines were racked from casks into tanks prior to the harvest of 2018, to allow them to harmonize prior to bottling early in 2019. The 2017s here were generally showing very well indeed in November, offering up outstanding purity of fruit, classic soil signatures and lovely girdles of acidity and one would have to term this an absolutely classic vintage at Domaine Leflaive. The grands crus all showed beautifully, avoiding the potential pitfalls of slightly easy-going wines the year after the severe frost damage, so I have to assume that the domaine was very vigorous to keep an eye on potential yields here and to keep concentration in the wines from the parcels that were the most hard hit by frost in 2016. The premier crus here are truly stunning and already perfectly delineated (with the possible exception of the rather reserved Pucelles), and while they will be accessible earlier, I would

strongly advise not touching any of them for at least four or five years, as there is so much more to unfold here with bottle age.



2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Leflaive

Despite a bit of frost damage here in 2017, the wine was showing beautifully at the time of my visit. The nose is deep, pure and quite classy for its level, offering up scents of pear, apple, a touch of orange zest, lovely, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and really has a superb core of fruit this year, with excellent cut and grip, fine focus and a long, vibrant and impressively complex finish. There cannot be too many Bourgogne Blancs (outside of Coche-Dury) at this level. 2020-2040. **91.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Puligny *villages* from Domaine Leflaive is excellent, with a fine sense of reserve at the present time that really augurs well for its future. The classic bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, white peach, a hint of iodine, chalky minerality, orange zest, fresh almond and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite racy in personality, with great depth at the core, zesty acids and superb focus and grip on the long and beautifully balanced finish. This will be approachable early on, but it would be fool-hardy not to let it blossom with at least a handful of years of bottle age. 2022-2050+. **92.**

2017 Meursault “Sous la d’Ane”- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Meursault “Sous la d’Ane” from Domaine Leflaive was the sole wine in the cellar this year that was a bit laid back structurally, and this is the bottling I would opt for early-drinking and let the Pulignys sleep for a few years. The bouquet is bright and quite stylish, offering up a mix of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, hazelnut and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, open-knit and already quite tasty, with a good core, nice complexity and bounce and a long, vibrant finish. Monsieur Vincent noted that they decided to green harvest this parcel of vines, as it had been frosted last year and its potential vigor was self-evident. It was the first time a green harvest had ever been used at the domaine. 2018-2045. **91.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clavoillon”- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Clavoillon is another outstanding wine in the domaine’s cellars this year. The bouquet is elegant and superb, jumping from the glass in a constellation of white peach, apple, lemon zest, complex, chalky minerality, white lilies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, refined and rock solid at the core, with excellent balance and grip, bright, zesty acids and a long, complex and vibrant finish. Terrific wine. 2023-2060+. **93.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Folatières *chez* Leflaive is also outstanding and really shows a superb structural chassis and girdle of acidity this year. The bouquet is very floral in personality, offering up scents of apple blossoms, acacia blossoms, pear, apple, a fine base of limestone soil and a nicely understated base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant on the attack, with a great core, lovely transparency and grip, bright acids and a long, racy and nicely reserved finish. The Folatières here can sometimes be a bit exuberant out of the blocks and not possess the same breed of the other premier crus, but this is emphatically not the case with this outstanding 2017 version! 2024-2065. **93+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Combettes”- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Combettes was the only wine in the Leflaive cellars that was a touch reductive at the time of my visit, but with just a bit of swirling, the magic to come was very easy to observe. The bouquet is a pure and classy blend of apple, pear, lemon, fresh almond, chalky minerality, citrus zest, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and quite racy in profile, with a rock solid core, laser-like focus, great grip and a very long, energetic and utterly classic young finish. This is already complex, but will be much more so once the wine has had a handful of years in the cellar to really blossom. Gorgeous juice. 2024-2065+. **94.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Pucelles”- Domaine Leflaive

As I mentioned in the introduction, the 2017 Pucelles was the only premier cru here that was a bit closed down at the time of my visit. The nose is reserved and showed quite nutty in personality in November, offering up scents of almond, white peach, apple, complex, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly powerful in profile for Leflaive Pucelles, with a plump core of fruit, good soil signature and fine focus, length and grip on the long and primary finish. This is going to be very good, but was not entirely happy about being tasted at the time of my visit. 2024-2065. **93-94.**

2017 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Leflaive is a beautiful wine in the making, but it is not dramatically superior to the exceptional Combettes this year. The bouquet is pure, already gorgeously complex and very vibrant, jumping from the glass in a refined mix of apple, white peach, chalky soil tones, a touch of bee pollen, fresh almond, vanillin oak, tangerine and apple blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-

bodied and quite elegant in profile, with a lovely core, racy acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. A lovely wine. 2025-2075. **94+**.

2017 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

Domaine Leflaive's 2017 Bâtard-Montrachet is superb wine and will be a great drink once it has fully opened up to share its secondary layering. The nose is pure and refined, delivering scents of apple, pear, lemon blossoms, just a whisper of the butter to come, gorgeous, chalky soil elements and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved structurally, with a superb core, great mineral drive, bright acids and great backend energy and precision on the very long finish. This is far less expressive out of the blocks than the Bienvenues, and if you must drink one of the Leflaive 2017 grand crus early on, make it the Bienvenues and let this great wine in the making properly blossom with bottle age! 2026-2075.

95+.

2017 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2017 Chevalier-Montrachet *chez* Leflaive is an absolute classic in the making. The beautiful bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined constellation of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, kaleidoscopic, limestone minerality, a touch of fresh almond, a sense of salinity and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and still fairly youthful, with a great core, magical backend mineral drive, impressive complexity and grip and a very, very long, zesty and laser-like finish. Stunning juice. 2027-2075+. **97.**

Domaine Etienne Sauzet (Puligny-Montrachet)

Émile Boudot is very happy with the style and quality of the 2017 vintage, which he terms "perhaps stylistically like a combination of 2009, 2010 and 2014." The Boudot family wasted no time getting rolling on the harvest of 2017 after the heat spike in the third week of August, as they were out in the vines on August 28th to start bringing in bunches and retaining good, high acid levels. This strategy paid off handsomely for them, as their lineup of 2017s- up and down most of the appellation hierarchy- is bright, tensile, mineral-infused and very racy and precise. I absolutely adored the style and cut of the villages level bottlings and the premier crus here, which are utterly classic in style and destined for great evolutions in bottle. However, this was one of those cellars in Puligny where the severe frost damage in the grand crus in 2016 seemed to have left a mark on the 2017 wines as well, as they were not quite as racy and structurally energetic at the time of my visit as the premier crus, albeit, quite a bit more powerful in style. It is possible that this was just the stage the respective wines found themselves in early November, but as there were a few other stops in the commune of Puligny where I had exactly the same impression, I suspect that this is just the style of the 2017 vintage at Domaine Sauzet and the longest distance runners here could end up being the very top premier crus, rather than the grand crus. Remember that the frost damage of 2016 was primarily in the grand crus and Bourgogne parcels in the village of Puligny-Montrachet and the vast, vast majority of premier crus escaped damage in 2016 and had nothing to compensate for in the following growing season of 2017. It is not that the grand crus here are disappointing in any respect, they are just a bit different stylistically from the premier crus this year, due to the very different circumstances the vineyards faced in the frosts of 2016. In general, they are bigger and more concentrated wines than the premier crus (which I suppose they ought to be in every vintage), but more muscular in personality and I found myself drawn more to the style of the racy and very precise premier crus chez Boudot, over the more powerful grand crus, even if on some absolute scale,

the grand crus are ultimately the superior wines. Of course, that said, the Chevalier and Montrachet here are absolutely brilliant wines in 2017!

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Sauzet is really a fine example of its level, offering up a bright and really quite complex bouquet of apple, white peach, a touch of orange peel, chalky soil tones and white flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and nicely plump on the attack, with a fine core, good acids and lovely length and grip on the energetic finish. Good juice. 2018-2035. **89.**

2017 Bourgogne Haute Côte de Beaune Blanc- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Haute Côte de Beaune Blanc from the Boudot family is also a very pretty wine, with more chalky soil influence on both the nose and palate than the Bourgogne Blanc. The nose delivers scents of lemon, apple, limestone minerality, white flowers and a touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite racy in profile, with a good core, again, quite impressive complexity for its appellation and a long, crisp and bouncy finish. This is quite different in personality from the Bourgogne Blanc, but both wines are very good for their respective levels. 2018-2030. **89,**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Enseignères”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Enseignères” from Domaine Sauzet is excellent and really of premier cru quality this year. The aromatic constellation reveals a fine blend of apple, pear, superb soil tones, orange peel, a touch of vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote redolent of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very pure, with racy acids, superb focus and grip, a lovely core of fruit and a very long, beautifully balanced and complex finish. A dynamite *villages* bottling! 2022-2050+. **91.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Puligny AC from the Boudot family is also an fine bottle of village wine, with a lovely girdle of acidity that will ask for a few years in the cellar to blossom properly. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of white peach, apple, spring flowers, chalky soil tones, lemon peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and quite impressively racy in personality, with a fine core, very good focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and zesty finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045+. **90+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Garenne”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Sauzet Clos de la Garenne, like all of the premier crus in the cellar here this year, is impressively reserved in personality and racy in structural profile and will age beautifully. The youthfully complex nose delivers scents of apple, yellow fruit, chalky soil tones, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely solid at the core, with racy acids, excellent focus and backend mineral drive and a long, promising and vibrant finish. A lovely bottle- just add some time in the cellar to blossom properly! 2022-2055. **91+.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

Domaine Sauzet’s 2017 Champ Gains is also impressively vibrant and racy in personality. The bouquet offers up a fine constellation of lemon zest, apple, white peach, limestone soils, vanillin oak and a youthful topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is full, racy and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with snappy acids, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. 2021-2055. **92.**

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

Émile Boudot has crafted a really fine example of Referts in 2017, with the wine delivering a superb bouquet of apple, white peach, beeswax, chalky minerality, vanillin oak and white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and racy in personality, with fine mid-palate intensity, excellent focus and backend lift and a very long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Just a classic example of Referts. 2022-2055. **92+**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

Domaine Sauzet’s 2017 Perrières was the most reserved premier cru in the lineup up to this point in our tasting, and shows outstanding potential. The pure and classy nose wafts from the glass with a bit of coaxing to reveal a youthful blend of lemon, apple, complex minerality, citrus zest, apple blossoms and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb transparency and grip, bright, snappy acids and beautiful precision on the long and racy finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2023-2055+. **93**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Truffières”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The domaine’s 2017 bottling of Truffières is another cellar treasure in the making. The already very expressive bouquet offers up a complex blend of apple, a touch of tangerine, lemon zest, complex, chalky minerality, a lovely framing of vanillin oak and a touch of lime blossom in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite deep in the mid-palate, with excellent soil signature, bright acids and impeccable focus and grip on the long, balanced and very refined finish. An utterly civilized drink in the making. 2023-2055+. **93**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Canet”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The Boudot family has produced an absolutely stellar example of Champ Canet as well in 2017. The wine delivers a fine aromatic constellation of white peach, apple, chalky minerality, orange zest, spring flowers and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and very racy in profile, with a lovely core, excellent cut and grip and a very long, properly youthful and zesty finish. 2023-2055+. **93**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières” En Richard - Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 vintage of En Richard from Domaine Sauzet is another absolutely stellar premier cru in the making. The bouquet is pure and very refined in personality, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a touch of *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones, fresh almond, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively pure and soil-driven, with a rock solid core of fruit, great cut and grip and a very long, beautifully balanced and youthfully complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2023-2055+. **94**.

2017 Puligny-Montrachet “Combettes”- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

At this point in our tasting, Émile Boudot has been delivering a masterful tour of the various premier cru *terroirs* of Puligny and it had been a progressions of beautiful wine after beautiful wine for more than an hour, but he had clearly saved the best premier cru for last! The 2017 Domaine Sauzet Combettes is a brilliant wine in the making, offering up an utterly classic bouquet of apple, white peach, kaleidoscopic minerality, lemon zest, vanillin oak and a tropical orchard full of citrus fruit blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great core of fruit, superb purity and bounce, racy acids and a very, very long, complex and absolutely electric finish. This has the backend lift and grip that only the very best white wines of 2017 share. 2024-2060. **94+**.



2017 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Bienvenues from Domaine Sauzet is an excellent wine in the making, with great purity and nascent complexity and no signs of undue forwardness on either the nose and palate, and yet, it cannot quite keep pace with the very racy Combettes this year. The bouquet of the Bienvenues offers up a lovely blend of apple, white peach, a touch of beeswax, chalky soil tones, fresh almond, vanillin oak and an esthery topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in profile for Bienvenues, with lovely elegance entwined within the impressive depth of fruit, bright acids and long, complex and fairly broad-shouldered finish. Monsieur Boudot's reference to the style of the 2010 vintage is quite evident here. 2026-2065. **94.**

2017 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The 2017 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Sauzet is also a fairly powerful example this year. The bouquet is flat out superb, wafting from the glass in a blend of apple, white peach, lemon blossoms, a touch of *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and rock solid at the core, with broad shoulders, fine focus and grip, very good acids and a long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. Again, this is quite powerful in style and very, very impressive, but it does not have the raciness and backend lift of the magical Combettes. 2027-2065+. **95.**

2017 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The domaine's 2017 Chevalier is a bit more reserved in profile out of the blocks than either the Bâtard or the Bienvenues. The bouquet is a pure and very classy mix of apple, pear, pastry cream, a very complex base of chalky minerality, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely depth at the core, with great mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and great length and grip on the refined and very, very promising finish. This will need time, but it is going to be great and perhaps not quite as muscular in profile as the previous two grand crus. 2027-2065+. **96.**

2017 Montrachet- Domaine Etienne Sauzet

The Boudot family has crafted an absolutely magical example of Montrachet in 2017, as here, the powerful style of the grand crus in this vintage is perfectly matched to its underlying *terroir*. The bouquet is brilliant, soaring from the glass in a blaze of apple, pear, a touch of youthful grapefruit, complex, chalky minerality, bee pollen, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with a great core, superb soil complexity, vibrant acids and stunning length and grip on the beautifully balanced and endless finish. Stunning young Monty! 2028-2075. **97.**

Chassagne-Montrachet

Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard (Chassagne-Montrachet)

Céline Fontaine has made lovely 2017s, though they vary a bit stylistically, depending partially on when the parcel was picked and partially on how badly the parcels were frosted in 2016. As Céline noted, a third factor was how the vines responded to hydric stress in the summer of 2017, "as potential alcohols varied from approximately thirteen percent in some vineyards to 11.8 or 11.9 percent in others, where the hydric stress slowed maturation during the growing season." It was her best drained soils that struggled the most during the dry periods of the summer, and those were the terroirs where maturity lagged a bit, while the more clay-dominated vineyards did better in the moments of drought. Céline Fontaine and her team started picking on September 3rd in 2017, which she noted "might have been a few days later than ideal", with their bunches in Caillerets the very first to be taken in this harvest. All of the white wines were showing very well in early November, with some of the wines quite forward in personality, wide open and recalling very much young 1992 white Burgundies in their early, succulent generosity. Others had more cut and grip and sense of stylistic reserve and are perhaps more like a cross between 2010 and 2014 in style, so one can see that there are no bad white wines in the Fontaine-Gagnard cellars in 2017, just variations on style and potential longevity. It was good to see the full lineup of wines produced again in 2017, as the Fontaine's parcels were very badly frosted last year and the range of wines was limited as a result. I mentioned in the introductory section on the 2017 vintage that in some cellars of primarily white wines, the village and premier cru wines tended to be superior examples of their respective terroirs and the vintage than the grand crus, which were not their customary step up in quality from the best premier crus. However, this was not the case at Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard this year, as the grand crus have turned out beautifully and are excellent across the board.

As is customary at the domaine, all of the white wines were already bottled, and the red wines had all been racked at the end of September of 2018 and would be bottled early in the new year. The malolactics for the red wines were all quite normal in duration, finishing up in the spring of 2018, with the exception of the domaine's beautiful bottling of Clos des Chênes, which

did not finish up its malo until the end of August and consequently, was a bit behind the other reds in the cellar in terms of its evolution in barrel. The Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard red wines are very much under the radar in my opinion, as these are some of the very best red wines found in the village of Chassagne, and the family's Clos des Chênes and Rugiens are quintessential examples of their respective great terroirs. Céline noted that their vines in Rugiens are not doing well and are really losing vigor in the last several years, succumbing to leaf roll disease, and one day will have to be replanted, but as they are reasonably old vines, she is loath to replant now and lose a proper, old vine Rugiens bottling until her children are ready to start helping full-time at the domaine! For those Burgundy lovers who lament the steep rise in price in the last decade of so many of their favorite producers' wines, the red wines here at Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard remain very fairly priced for their quality and should be on the shopping list now, as one day the prices are likely to start catching up with their exceptional quality! And, if you go shopping for the Fontaine family's reds, do not ignore their truly excellent examples of Chassagne rouge, which are as good as any found in the village and their premier crus of Morgeot and Clos St. Jean are really superb red Burgundies and will repay cellaring tenfold and make you feel really, really savvy when you start pulling bottles out of the cellar eight to ten years down the road!

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Domaine Fontaine's 2017 Bourgogne Blanc is a very pretty example, offering up notes of apple, pear, salty soil tones, spring flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak on the nose. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, wide open and ample in personality, with sound framing acids and good length and bounce on the succulent finish. This will drink well right from the start. 2018-2030. **88.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Chassagne *villages* was raised in twenty percent new oak this year *chez* Fontaine and is another really pretty, early drinking and juicy example of the vintage. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a blend of peach, apple, a touch of orange peel, a lovely base of soil and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and plump in the middle, with lovely succulence on the attack, good soil signature, sound acids and a long, generous and vibrant finish. This is more fruit-driven in personality this year than in many, but has lots of charm. 2018-2040. **89.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet "la Maltroie"- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

Céline Fontaine has sixty year-old vines in Maltroie and she notes that these vines always produces bunches with tiny berries, so there is always excellent depth in this wine from the fine skin to juice ratio. The 2017 has turned out very nicely, but again, this is one of those forward, 1992 lookalikes in the cellar this year, as it offers up a fine nose of apple, pear, almond, stony soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and juicy on the attack, with a good core, fine mineral drive, a sound framing of acidity and very good length and grip on the easy to drink and easy to love finish. Good juice. 2018-2040+. **90.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos St. Jean"- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

I know I am in the minority, but every time a I taste an example of Clos St. Jean blanc, I think that this would be better if it were planted to pinot noir! I know the market is hardly in step with my perception, but Clos St. Jean is my favorite red wine *terroir* in the village and I just cannot find the same magic with the white wines grown here. That said, the 2017 version from

Céline Fontaine is lovely, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, lime zest, chalky soil tones, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and tasty, with a good core, bright framing acids and lovely length and grip on the complex and bouncy finish. Again, this is wide open and ready for business right out of the blocks, but is very nicely balanced and should age fairly well. 2018-2040+. **91.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet- “Clos des Murées”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Domaine Fontaine 2017 Clos des Murées was the first wine that really showed a bit of cut and youthful grip on the backend, and though it too will drink nicely from release, it may be even better with a few years’ worth of bottle age. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of pear, apple, citrus blossoms, limestone minerality, orange zest and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows a nice bit of youthful *nervosité* on the backend, with fine mid-palate depth, lovely focus and grip and a long, vibrant and classy finish. Good juice. 2018-2040+. **91+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet Vergers”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

In vintage that offer very good early appeal, I often find that Vergers and Chenevottes are the two most seductive premier crus out of the blocks in the village of Chassagne, and both of these cuvées are irresistible *chez* Fontaine in 2017. The Vergers delivers a superb bouquet of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, a touch of *crème patissière*, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, juicy and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent cut and grip and a long, zesty and beautifully balanced finish. This is flat out delicious. 2018-2040+. **92.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Chenevottes is one of the smallest production premier crus in the Fontaine-Gagnard lineup, as there are only two barrels of this lovely wine, with one of them new in 2017. The wine was absolutely singing at the time of my visit, offering up a complex aromatic constellation of pear apple, a touch of tangerine, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with lovely focus and grip, bright, vibrant acids and a very long, pure and complex finish. This is a touch more powerful in style than the Vergers in 2017, but equally tasty out of the blocks. 2018-2040+. **92.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeots”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

Céline Fontaine’s parcel of vines in Morgeot are in the extreme southern end of the vineyard, situated between the superb *climat* of la Cardeuse and the Santenay border. Her 2017 bottling is the first premier cru in the cellar here that really will demand a bit of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity, which I take as a good sign for its future development. The nose delivers a promising mix of apple, lemon, a touch of orange, lovely minerality, vanillin oak and a delicately floral topnote redolent of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely mineral in personality, with snappy acids, lovely cut and grip and a long, focused and nicely reserved finish. Fine potential. 2020-2045+. **92+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Grande Montagne”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Fontaine family’s vines in la Grande Montagne were planted in 1991, so they are just starting to come into their prime, as they have now passed their twenty-fifth birthday. The 2017 version was showing fine potential at the time of my visit, with the bouquet delivering a fine combination of pear, delicious apple, fresh almond, chalky minerality, a hint of the *crème patissière* to come and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and again, like the Morgeot, nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a good core, fine transparency and a long, vibrant and nicely racy finish. Good juice. 2020-2045. **92+.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Boudriotte”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Fontaine family’s parcels in Boudriotte lie in the *climat* of les Fairendes, which is up above Boudriotte on the slope and just below Grands Ruchottes, Virondot and Caillerets and better-situated than much of Boudriotte. The 2017 here is one of the most closed and youthful showing premier crus in the cellar, and a bit of coaxing is required to get the nose to reveal scents of apple, pear orange zest stony minerality, a hint of the almond to come and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and fairly closed in profile, with lovely mid-palate depth, good backend soil signature, bright acids and a long, focused and racy finish. This will be lovely, but will need some time to blossom. 2022-2045. **92.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Caillerets from Domaine Fontaine is a ripe and excellent wine. Despite these grapes being picked first, the natural alcohol has come in at 13.3 percent in 2017, showing just how fast the sugar levels were rising after the late August heat spike. The wine delivers a superb bouquet of apple, pear, a very complex base of chalky minerality, spring flowers, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, lovely succulent fruit on the attack, excellent mineral drive, bright, snappy acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long and quite snappy finish. This wine retained excellent acidity, despite the sugars getting up into a pretty generous range, and the wine should age beautifully, but also drink with beauty and authority with only a few years in the cellar. 2021-2045+. **93.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Romanée”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 la Romanée from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard is also a superb example of the vintage and not quite as powerful in personality as the Caillerets this year. The ripe and lovely aromatic constellation wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, tangerine, complex minerality, *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and complex, with lovely depth at the core, good acids and mineral drive and a long, complex and nicely youthful finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2022-2045+. **93.**

2017 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

Céline Fontaine’s 2017 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet is outstanding. The wine is going to need some time in the cellar to really come into its own (as a proper grand cru should!), but once it is ready to drink, it is going to be superb. The youthful bouquet delivers a fine blend of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, fresh almond, pastry cream, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and youthfully complex, with an excellent core of fruit, beautiful transparency and grip, bright, snappy acids and a very long, pure and classy finish. 2024-2060. **95.**

2017 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Bâtard-Montrachet *chez* Fontaine is big, pure and nicely reserved in profile. The nose offers up a very promising blend of pear, apple, a touch of clementine, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with classical proportions, fine mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and a very long, youthfully complex and vibrant finish. This is very, very good Bâtard in the making. 2025-2060. **94+.**

2017 Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Montrachet from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard has turned out beautifully and shows no adverse effects from its severe frost damage of 2016. The nose jumps from the glass in a superb blend of apple, pear, orange zest, a touch of fresh almond, a hint of mint, chalky soil

tones, spring flowers and a judicious framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and quite a bit more elegant in profile than the Bâtard, with excellent intensity at the core, lovely soil signature, a superb girdle of acidity and a very long, complex and refined finish. Great juice. 2027-2065. **96.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard is a very pretty wine, with its fifty-fifty split of gamay and pinot noir giving the wine a nicely red fruity nose of cherries, a touch of cranberry, a fine base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and bouncy, with good focus, length and grip on the wide open finish. A stylish middleweight. 2018-2030+. **87.**

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The Fontaines' 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* is a good example of its level, offering up a nicely youthful bouquet of red and black cherries, a bit of bonfire, dark soil tones and a topnote of gamebird. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with a soil-driven personality, good focus and balance and a bit of backend tannin perking up the long finish. Good juice, but it will need a couple of years to blossom. 2021-2040+. **88.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Chassagne *villages* Rouge from Domaine Fontaine is lovely, red fruity and absolutely classic in profile. The vibrant nose hops from the glass in a mix of cherries, blood orange, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil and a floral topnote redolent of peonies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely transparent, with a good core, moderate tannins and impressive length and grip on the complex and very well-balanced finish. This is a delicious red wine in the making. 2023-2050+. **90.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet "Clos St. Jean" Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Clos St. Jean *rouge* from Céline Fontaine is outstanding on both the nose and palate. The sappy and transparent bouquet delivers scents of cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebird, roses, a touch of vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very elegant in profile, with a sappy core, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very long, tangy and promising finish. Do yourself a favor and buy a few bottles of this cuvée to tuck in the cellar for six or seven years and see why I am so bullish on this *terroir* for red wines! 2024-2060. **92.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet "Morgeot" Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Morgeot *rouge* from the domaine is also excellent, showing a more black fruity personality out of the blocks than the pure red fruit of the Clos St. Jean, but sharing the same sense of elegance inherent in the best reds of the vintage. The bouquet is pure and classy, delivering scents of red and black cherries, squab, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a hint of orange peel, dark soil tones and a hint of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, reserved and rock solid at the core, with ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and nascently complex finish. This too will be excellent. 2027-2060. **92.**

2017 Volnay "Clos des Chênes"- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

As I mentioned in the introduction, this wine was the last to complete its malolactic fermentation in the cellars this year and was lagging just a bit behind the other wines in terms of its expressiveness, but its ultimate quality was still very, very easy to appreciate. The bouquet is pure and classic, offering up a constellation of cherries, pomegranate, cocoa powder, gamebird, a

great base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with great mineral drive, superb focus and grip, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and a very long, perfectly balanced and complex finish. A superb Clos des Chênes in the making! 2027-2065+. **94.**

2017 Pommard “Rugiens”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2017 Rugiens from Céline Fontaine is another very, very good wine in the making, but it cannot match the optimal ripeness of the Clos des Chênes (due to the leaf roll disease) and is a bit more reticent out of the blocks as a result. The nose is a fine mix of black cherries, plums, a touch of currant leaf, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a lovely base of soil, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nascently complex and ripely tannic, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, balanced and youthful finish. This is not quite as sappy at the core as the other top reds in the cellar this year, but it will still be a lovely wine in the fullness of time. 2027-2060. **92.**



Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils (Chassagne-Montrachet)

Alex Moreau has once again made one of the finest lineups of 2017s in the entire Côte d'Or. He began picking early, getting out in the vines with his harvesting team on August 30th and has managed to retain beautiful cut and mineral drive in each and every one of his white wines. There is the racy precision and mineral undertow to the 2017s chez Moreau that recall the brilliant 2014s here, though this more recent vintage may have even a bit more mid-palate

generosity. As is customary when visiting Domaine Moreau in November, the Bourgogne bottlings were already bottled, and the other white wines in various stages of evolution, with some already racked into tank and fined, others assembled, but not yet fined, and a few still in cask. It was great to see the full lineup of wines again in 2017, after the severe frost damage in Chassagne in 2016 had limited the number of premier crus offered by the domaine dramatically. Alex had decided last year that the production from the most severely frost-damaged premier crus last year would be best just used to stretch out the Chassagne AC bottling in 2016, rather than trying to micro-vinify tiny premier cru cuvées, so the range chez Moreau in 2016 was quite a small one. As I mentioned last year, two of the wines that the Moreau brothers had been making for quite some time from purchased grapes, their Volnay “Santenots” and their Bâtard-Montrachet, were replanted by the proprietor in 2016, so these wines are no longer part of the Domaine Moreau lineup from the 2016 vintage forwards. I did not think to ask if the brothers intend to purchase fruit from these parcels once they start to produce again, but it has to be hard to go from purchasing fruit from nice old vines in the two vineyards to buying fruit from young vines, so it will be interesting to see if they make a reappearance in the domaine’s lineup sometime down the road. Getting back to what is in the cellar in 2017, the domaine’s wines are strikingly gorgeous examples of their underlying terroir in this vintage, so that one goes from premier cru to premier cru and finds absolutely quintessential examples of each vineyard, so that if one were to want to do a master class of Chassagne terroir, selecting the range of Alex’s premier crus would be a very, very fine way to show of the classical style of each terroir.

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The Moreau family’s 2017 Bourgogne *blanc* is a lovely example, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a nice esthery topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, and nicely plump at the core, with fine acids and focus and a long, lifted and succulent finish. I like the inner tension here. Good juice. 2018-2030. **89.**

2017 Saint Aubin “en Remilly”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The consistently excellent en Remilly bottling from Alex Moreau is once again superb in 2017. This wine had already been fined at the time of my visit, but was showing very nicely on both the nose and palate. The bouquet offers up a fine mix of pear, apple, lemon blossoms, chalky minerality, incipient notes of *crème patissière* and a delicate base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and vibrant, with a good core, excellent soil signature, zesty acids and lovely cut and grip on the long and complex finish. 2018-2035. **91.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The domaine’s excellent Chassagne *villages* cuvée was in the same stage of development as the Saint Aubin, having been assembled and already fined prior to my visit. The 2017 vintage is very strong for this excellent village wine, with the nose delivering an elegant and very floral constellation of apple, pear, a pungent note of lemon blossoms, a fine base of chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and seamlessly balanced, with bright acids, excellent focus and grip, lovely nascent complexity and a long, vibrant and classy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **91.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Clos St. Jean”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

None of the 2017 premier crus in the Moreau cellars had been fined yet and were in a good stage for tasting in early November. The 2017 Clos St. Jean is a lovely example of the

vintage, offering up a bright bouquet of pear, apple, a touch of lime zest, chalky minerality, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with lovely acids fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and quite classy finish. Good juice. 2020-2045+. **91+**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Champgains”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Champgains from Domaine Moreau was one of the outliers in the range of premier crus, as this wine was still in cask and had not yet been racked. It was showing very nicely, with impressive complexity for such a young wine in its aromatic constellation of apple, tangerine, *crème patissière*, stony minerality, floral tones and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, racy and quite mineral in profile, with a full-bodied format, a superb core of fruit, lovely focus and grip and a long, vibrant and classic finish. Excellent juice. 2022-2045+. **92+**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vergers”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Vergers *chez* Moreau is a beautiful wine in the making, with great elegance on display on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is a lovely blend of apple, pear, spring flowers, a touch of pastry cream, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely reserved in personality, with a juicy core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, bright acids and impressive backend tension on the long, balanced and zesty finish. Fine juice. 2021-2045+. **92**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Chenevottes is never the most complex of premier crus in the constellation of Chassagne, but it is probably my favorite for drinking early on in its evolution, as the wine is often absolutely complete right out of the blocks, and this is certainly the case for Alex Moreau’s 2017 version. The beautiful bouquet jumps from the glass in a complex blend of apple, pear, lemon zest, chalky soil tones, a hint of the butter to come, vanillin oak and plenty of apple blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and nicely balanced, with just a touch more reserve than the wide open nose suggests. The finish is long, focused and vibrant, with excellent cut and grip and plenty of complexity. A beautiful bottle of Chenevottes. 2021-2045+. **92+**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Maltroie from Domaine Moreau is also a classic example of its respective *terroir*. The bouquet is deep, pure and very refined, offering up scents of pear, tangerine, stony soil tones, bee pollen, vanillin oak and a nice touch of citrus blossoms up high. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with excellent mineral drive, a fine core, racy acids and a long, perfectly balanced and nascently complex finish. High class juice. 2022-2045+. **93**.

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

For many years, the premier cru of Morgeot was the one in Chassagne that I was most familiar with, as this was the wine from Domaine Ramonet that was most available in the New York market in my early years in the wine trade and I would drink it whenever I had the opportunity. So, tasting Alex Moreau’s archetypical 2017 Morgeot brought back a wealth of memories of those early days, as this wine is as great and classic a young Morgeot as one could hope to find in the vintage. The nose soars from the glass in a great blend of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, vanillin oak, lemon zest and just a whisper of the buttery elements that will come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, bright and seamlessly

balanced, with a rock solid core, great soil signature, vibrant acids and outstanding focus and grip on the long and very promising finish. Great juice. 2024-2055. **94.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The domaine’s Caillerets is also a brilliant wine in 2017. The bouquet is a bit grumpier than any of the others so far in the lineup, as this was assembled into tank the most recently, but with some coaxing, offers up a fine blend of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a hint of *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely transparency and blossoming elegance, lovely structure and truly stunning length and grip on the youthful and electric finish. This will need some time in the bottle to blossom properly, as it has a great girdle of acidity, and will be exceptional when it is ready to go. 2025-2065. **94-95.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Grands Ruchottes *chez* Moreau was still in barrel at the time of my visit and consequently, absolutely singing on both the nose and palate. The stunning bouquet wafts from the glass in a brilliant blend of apple, lemon, pear, very complex, limestone minerality, white lilies, a hint of butter and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very refined in profile, with tremendous depth at the core, superb balance and grip and marvelous intensity of flavor on the lifted, complex and snappy finish. A beautiful wine in the making. 2025-2070. **95.**

2017 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau’s 2017 Chevalier-Montrachet is one of the most stunning white wines to be found in the vintage in the Côte de Beaune. The bouquet is pure, complete and absolutely a quintessential expression of this magical *terroir*, delivering a magical constellation of pear, lemon blossoms, tangerine, a touch of *crème patissière*, orange zest, kaleidoscopic limestone minerality and a very classy base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, racy and supremely elegant, with a full-bodied and flawless format, a great core of fruit, snappy acids and a long, laser-like and beautifully complex finish. Pure magic. 2027-2070. **98.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Bourgogne *rouge* from Domaine Moreau is a lovely bottle in the making and was showing very nicely in November, despite having been bottled a couple of months previous. The bouquet is bright and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird, and a touch of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and nicely transparent in personality, with good acids and just a whisper of backend tannin perking up the finish. Good juice. 2018-2030+. **89.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge- Dom. Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 old vine Chassagne *rouge* from Alex Moreau is a terrific wine in the making and will be a fine value. The bouquet is pure and nicely black fruity in personality, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, *pigeon* and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with a good core of fruit, fien soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. 2022-2050. **91.**

2017 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Cardeuse” Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 la Cardeuse is a bit more structured wine out of the blocks than the fine *Vieilles Vignes*, but will be simply outstanding when it is ready to drink. The deep and pure bouquet

delivers scents of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, a fine base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a lovely sense of sappiness at the core, with ripe, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, pure and nascently complex finish. This will be outstanding. 2025-2065. **92+.**

2017 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Cailleret from Domaine Moreau is another excellent wine in the making. Like all of the reds here this year, the Caillerets is nicely black fruity in personality, offering up a very complex blend of black cherries, cassis, dark chocolate, venison, a bit of bonfire, vanillin oak, a fine expression of the vineyard’s stony soil undertow and a bit of upper register spice. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very long, with a rock solid core, ripe tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long, tangy and very promising finish. This will need a good decade’s worth of bottle age to blossom, but it is going to be excellent. 2027-2065+. **93.**

2017 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2017 Clos des Chênes from Domaine Moreau is another outstanding bottle in the making. This wine is properly still youthful on both the nose and palate, but shows plenty of promise in its aromatic constellation of cassis, sweet blackberries, bitter chocolate, a complex base of soil tones, gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, fine focus and grip, silky tannins and a long, beautifully balanced and still quite primary finish. All this needs is time to blossom! 2027-2065+. **93+.**

RECENTLY-TASTED SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE WINES PART TWO- DECEMBER 2018



October's gold and russet tones in one of Ribeira Sacra's sub-regions, Quiroga-Bibi.

Part Two of my annual coverage of the beautiful wines of Spain has been delayed a bit more than I anticipated when I first finished up Part One back in June of last year. I had imagined working on the second installment of my coverage of Spain in September and October of last year, but the sheer volume of samples piling up in my cellar over the last quarter of 2018 had me falling behind on my tasting and this article kept getting shuffled to the “next issue” as my pace of writing notes on samples could not keep up with the number of bottles coming in. On one hand, this was unfortunate, as some of the superb wines featured below have now been in the market for a few months and may have already sold through the pipeline, but the delay also allowed for new vintages of many old favorites from around the Iberian peninsula to arrive here in the US and this article is that much deeper and richer for its inadvertent delay in getting written. Tasting through the new releases from many of my favorite producers in Spain is always a happy time for me, as there is so much good wine being produced today in this country that it is hard not to come to the conclusion that Spanish wine is undergoing a renaissance that is every bit as exciting as that of Spanish *haute cuisine* a decade ago. There are so many young and energetic winegrowers scattered across Spain today with great vision for their wines and regions,

coupled to deep respect for the traditions and unique *terroirs* that have made Spanish wines so beautiful for so long. These, of course, are not generally the well-funded modernists of Spanish wine, who swept across the high plains and mountains of the peninsula in the 1990s and early years of the new millennium preaching the stale creed of “international” wines to parrot the industrially-inspired and expensive plonk that was being churned out in a few other well-established wine regions at the same time. Rather, these are the talented (and often quite young) visionaries who wish to champion the unique grape varieties and *terroirs* of Spain’s incredibly complex quilt of wine-producing regions and produce wines of beautiful elegance and bold individuality which pay homage to the deep cultural roots of traditional Spanish wine.

Many of these talented new breed of winegrowers in Spain have harkened back to regions that were on the verge of historical irrelevance a generation ago, when vineyards were going abandoned and many young people in their respective locales were looking to other career opportunities and leaving their regions of birth to seek better economic prospects far from their childhood homes. A perfect case in this regard is Galicia, which was on winemaking life support in the 1980s, but now is one of the most exciting and dynamic winegrowing regions to be found anywhere in the world. Happily, the new generation has found opportunity in places such as Galicia, reclaiming old vines that had been overgrown by the countryside during their period of abandonment, nursing them back to health and striking out to discover new heights of quality and complexity for the wines of their regions. It is indeed a very, very exciting time to be following the new course of Spanish wine. One has to wonder if all of this dynamism in classically-inspired Spanish wine today would be possible at all, if there had not been a few holdouts back in the 1980s and 1990s who rejected the notion of internationally-inspired, “modern” Spanish wines and had clung tightly to the old school traditions of their wine-producing regions and steered clear of the modern tides sweeping through Spanish winemaking at that time. One of these old school holdouts was certain Albariño *maestro*, Francisco “Paco” Dovalo López, who helped found the artisanal growers’ association, the *Asociación de Bodegas Artesanas*, in Rías Baixas back in 1989 and continued making his superb wines from his winery of Adegas Cabaleiro do Val.

As I was getting ready to put the finishing touches on this article, I heard the sad news that Paco Dovalo had passed away in his hometown of Meaño, located in the Val do Salnés. Paco Dovalo was a great man during his lifetime and I had the pleasure to spend some time with him and other talented members of his growers’ association during my last trip to Galicia a few years back. He was instrumental in rejecting the push to make Albariño a simple, industrial wine produced from huge yields, commercial yeasts and safe, boring winemaking recipes. Though he only officially started to commercialize his own wines on a full-time basis in 1989, the year he founded the region’s artisanal growers’ association, Paco’s family had been grape growers and wine producers in the region for many centuries, though they long sold off most of their grape and wine production and only bottled wine for family and friends prior to Paco starting to sell everything from his small estate in 1989. Paco Dovalo was clearly the inspiration for many of the younger *vignerons* in the region, and his role in the renaissance that has quietly swept through the vineyards of Val do Salnés and other parts of the Albariño wine-producing horizon will deserve a prominent role when the history of the region is written a few decades down the road. I am sure that other Spanish wine regions where this move back to traditionally-inspired wines is in full swing also have or have had their own early pioneers such as Paco Dovalo, and it

is these older generation producers who eschewed the easier financial path and critical praise that was lavished on the modernists of Spanish wine in the 1990s (and which continues on in some circles even to this day) to which all of us who love classically styled Spanish wines owe a debt of appreciation. Their early sacrifices made it possible for today's younger generation to follow in their footsteps and lead Spain on into the brightest wine future of any wine-producing country in the world. Thank you Paco!



Paco Dovalo (right) and his US importer, Gerry Dawes, standing next to one of Paco's 150 year-old Albariño vines.

This new issue is loaded with tasting notes from many of this newer generation of Spanish winegrowers “classicists” that have appeared in these pages previously, such as the very talented team of winemakers at Envinate and 4 Monos Viticultores, as well as the gifted Laura Lorenzo of Datterra Viticultores and Pedro Rodríguez of Guímaro, both in Ribeira Sacra. Also appearing here are many of Paco Dovalo's Albariño brothers in arms from the *Asociación de Bodegas Artesanas*, in Rías Baixas, including Eulogio Gondar of Lagar de Candes, Manolo Dovalo of Adega Rozas and Fernando Meis Otero, not to mention the extremely talented husband and wife team of Alberto Nanclares and Silvia Prieto in Cambados. And, of course, we have notes on a few of the deceased *maestro*'s beautiful Albariños as well, which age as long and

gracefully as any in the region. There are also notes on all of the superb current releases, both red and white, from Luis Rodríguez's Viña de Martín winery in Ribeiro and a huge lineup of great new (primarily) Mencía-based bottlings from Ribeira Sacra, Valdeorras and Bierzo. Included in Part Two of my coverage from Spain are also the new releases from Goyo García in Ribera del Duero, as fine and deep a range of both red and white stars from the Canary Islands and a wide array of new releases (often of nicely aged wines) from several of Portugal's top wine-producing regions. These include a new producer in the Douro named Luis Seabra, who is making simply the finest and most classically-styled dry wines I have tasted from the Port region, as well as new releases from the great old Bairrada and Dão producer of Caves São João. So, there is a very good reason this feature is so long and nicely delayed in its release, as I have been working through a small mountain of truly exceptional bottles of wine in the last few months!

The article is organized as I have done in the past, starting in the northwestern corner of Spain in Galicia and working across the north of the peninsula towards the east in a swath of neighboring wine regions, and then descending south to the next band of D.O.s and again working from west to east, repeating this until we finally reach the south of the country and Jerez. Prior to the geographical strata of regions, I have listed all the recent Cava releases and all of the Rosado bottlings I have tasted for this report in their own distinct sections, rather than including each in its proper geographical subset. After working through all of the D.O.s in Spain that I have tasted for this report, you will find the sections on the Canary Islands and then the recently-tasted wines from Portugal. Though I did taste a few still wines from the Jerez region, there are not notes on the most famous wines from Jerez, Sherry. A few Spanish wine importers have asked me to start writing about Sherry as well, but I have so far resisted, as I simply do not feel I know anywhere near enough about Sherry, or have sufficient experience with the region, to be qualified to write about those wines with proper insight that they deserve, and I leave Sherry for those with the requisite knowledge to handicap those wines.

Cava

2016 Júlia Bernet "Cuvée Ú" Cava Brut Nature NV

Xavier Bernet is one of the newer members of the "Six Percent Club" of Cava producers, having only started his winery in 2003 (and which he named for his daughter, Júlia). Xavier Bernet is a farmer first and foremost, and has moved over to certified organic viticulture since the 2016 vintage. The only grape he grows is Xarel-lo, which makes his Cava a bit unique in the firmament of top, small producers in the Penedès. His Cuvée Ú is his entry level bottling and spends two years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. The 2016 was disgorged in October of 2018 and offers up a complex and vibrant bouquet of lemon, tart pear, a touch of menthol, beautiful minerality, dried flowers and a bit of ocean breeze. On the palate the wine is bright, frothy and full-bodied, with a fine core, zesty acids and impressive focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is a lovely bottle of Cava. 2019-2030+. **89+.**

Júlia Bernet "Cuvée R130" Cava Brut Nature NV

The Cuvée R130 bottling from Xavi Bernet is aged twice as long on its fine lees as the Cuvée Ú, so this fine, Xarel-lo-only cuvee sees four years *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. The current release delivers a deep and refined bouquet of lemon, bread fruit, beautifully complex soil tones, warm bread, wild fennel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully deep at the core, with pinpoint bubbles, bright acids and excellent backend mineral drive on the long and complex finish. Fine juice. 2019-2035. **91.**

Júlia Bernet “Exsum Label” Brut Nature NV

Xavier Bernet’s Exsum Label is from the 2015 vintage and is an experimental lot, as it completed part of its initial fermentation in bottle. It is made from a pink-skinned variation of Xarel-lo and, consequently, is a bit golden in color and offers up a deep and refined nose of tart orange, a bit of lemon peel, salty minerality, fresh-baked bread, a touch of rosemary and a topnote of wild fennel. On the palate the wine is deep, brisk and full-bodied, with an excellent core of fruit, frothy *mousse* and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is serious juice, made with no added SO2 or *dosage*. 2019-2030+. **92.**

Eudald-Massana Noya “Brut Familia” NV

The current release of Eudald-Massana Noya “Brut Familia” is from the base year of 2014 and was finished with a *dosage* of eight grams per liter. This is a blend of the traditional three grapes of Cava, Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada, and offers up a superb bouquet of apple, a touch of orange, salty minerality, fresh-baked bread and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and beautifully defined by its underlying minerality, with a good core of fruit, elegant *mousse* and very good length and grip on the balanced finish. Good juice. 2018-2025. **89+.**

Eudald-Massana Noya Brut Nature “Reserva” NV

The new release of Eudald-Massana Noya Brut Nature “Reserva” is from the base year of 2012. In addition to spending two years longer aging *sur latte* and receiving no *dosage*, the cépages of this bottling is a bit different from the Brut Familia as well, as the Xarel-lo in the blend is from the estate’s oldest vines and there is also a percentage of chardonnay included in the cuvée. The nose is impressively complex, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of pear, gentle smokiness, dried flowers, citrus peel and a classy base of salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a good core of fruit, lovely *mousse* and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is really, really good Cava! 2018-2030+. **92.**

Mestres “1312” Cava Reserva Brut NV

The Mestres “1312” Cava Reserva Brut is composed of a blend of thirty percent each of Macabeu and Xarel-lo and forty percent Parellada. It is aged for twenty months under cork, prior to disgorgement and resealing with a second, new cork. The *dosage* is just under six grams per liter and the new release was disgorged in February of 2018. The bouquet is bright, elegant and complex, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of lime, tart pear, stony minerality, a touch of bread dough, sea salts and a bit of wild fennel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and focused, with frothy *mousse*, a fine core, good mineral drive and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. Mestres makes some of the most beautiful Cava in all of Catalunya and this is an excellent value! 2018-2030+. **92.**

2016 Bertha Cava Brut Nature Reserva

The 2016 Bertha Brut Nature Reserva is composed of a pretty much even split of the big three grapes of Cava: Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada. The wine was disgorged in April of 2018 and offers up a fien nose of lemon, bread fruit, stony minerality, menthol and a topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and complex, with pretty refined *mousse*, lovely focus and grip and a long, well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2018-2025. **88.**

2014 Suriol Cava Reserva Brut Nature

The 2014 Suriol Cava Reserva Brut Nature is a blend of the traditional “big three” grapes of traditional Cava- Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada. The wine spent a bit more than three years aging *sur lattes* prior to its disgorgement in May of 2018. The wine delivers a fine nose of bread fruit, lemon peel, fresh-baked bread, salty soil tones and a gentle touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with lovely mineral drive, excellent balance and grip, fine *mousse* and a long, complex and bone dry finish. This is an excellent Brut Nature Cava, with real depth at the core. 2018-2035. **92.**

2013 Suriol Cava Rosado Reserva Brut Nature

The 2013 Suriol Cava Rosado is composed of a blend of Garnaxta and Monastrell. It spent more than four years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement in May of 2018. The wine is a lovely salmon color and offers up a vibrant and complex bouquet of strawberries, blood orange, lovely spice tones, salty minerality, dried flowers and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, pinpoint bubbles and a long, well-balanced and racy finish. This is non-*dosé* and works best at the table or with tapas, where it is really, really good. 2018-2030. **91.**



The great old Garnacha vines (destined for Rosado) and stony soils of Bodegas Catajarros in Cigales.

Rosado

2017 Giné Rosat- Buil & Giné (Priorat) screwcap

The 2017 Giné Rosat from Buil & Giné is a ripe wine, coming in at 14.5 percent alcohol and is fairly dark in color. The wine delivers a nicely vinous bouquet of desiccated black cherries, a nice array of spice tones, cherry skin, a hint of wild fennel and a nice touch of salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really well-balanced for its octane, with a good core, bright acids and very good length and grip on the complex and nicely vinous finish. This would be terrific in high summer with grilled meats! As it is a screwcap, make sure to decant it twenty minutes before serving, as the finish opens up noticeably with some aeration. 2019-2020+? **89.**

2016 Rioja Rosado- Bodegas Lecea (Rioja Alta)

I really like all of the wines from Bodegas Lecea, and I find their Rosado quite ageworthy. The 2016 is still on the youngish side, but is drinking quite nicely, offering up scents of white cherries, orange peel, salty soil tones and a nice touch of upper register spice. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and nicely mineral in profile, with a good core, fine focus and grip and plenty of bouncy acidity adding vibrancy on the long and blossoming finish. Good juice. 2018-2030. **90.**

2016 Rosado “Lagrima de Garnacha”- Bodegas Aliaga (Navarra)

Bodegas Aliaga makes two distinct bottlings of Rosado, with their Lagrima de Garnacha cuvée their deeper-colored and more vinous example. This is made by the *saignée* method, with the juice run off from the tanks of the oldest vine Garnacha they have in their vineyards. The color is a pretty deep Rosé and the nose is pure and complex, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, blood orange, salty soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, quite the vinous personality and a long, balanced and zesty finish. This is clearly the gastronomic bottling of Rosado from Aliaga and the wine is very well made. 2018-2025+. **90.**

2015 Rosado “Lagrima de Luna”- Bodegas Aliaga (Navarra)

The Lagrima de Luna bottling of Rosado from Bodegas Aliaga is designed to be their more forward, lighter *aperitif* cuvée, with a shorter skin contact prior to the *saignée* made for the rosé. But, this does not mean that the wine does not age gracefully and the 2015 version is really at a lovely point right now, offering up a bright bouquet of strawberries, tangerine, salty soil tones and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely round and generous now on the attack, with a good juicy core, sound acids and fine focus and grip on the long finish. Very pretty Rosado, albeit, not as complex as their Lagrima de Garnacha bottling. 2018-2023. **88.**

2014 Rosado “Lagrima de Garnacha”- Bodegas Aliaga (Navarra)

The 2014 vintage of Lagrima de Garnacha from Bodegas Aliaga shows just how beautifully these Navarra Rosados can age from a top estate. At age four, the wine is wide open and at its apogee of peak drinkability, offering up scents of blood orange, cherry, a touch of citrus peel, dried rose petals and a complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with bright acids, excellent focus and balance and lovely grip on the long and zesty finish. This is superb Rosado. 2018-2025+. **92.**

2014 Rosado “Viña Catajarros”- Bodegas Hermanos Merino (Cigales)

Bodegas Hermanos Merino is one of my favorite Rosado producers in Cigales, and in fact, ninety percent of what they produce is actually Rosado. The vineyards here look like one is

walking in Châteauneuf du Pape, with all of the gnarled bush vines and the soil covered with large, round stones. The estate's 2014 Rosado is also right in its peak window of drinkability and showing beautifully today, wafting from the glass in a fine aromatic constellation of orange peel, blood orange, stony minerality, a touch of *garrigue* and a potpourri of other spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, zesty and complex, with a fine core, good backend mineral drive, bright acids and a long, complex and classy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2025. **92.**

Rías Biaxas Blanco

2017 Albariño “Nessa”- Adegas Gran Vinum (Rías Biaxas) Screwcap

The 2017 Albariño “Nessa” from Adegas Gran Vinum is a good bottle, but it is already a touch compromised structurally from its choice of closure, as the wine is slightly pinched on the palate. The nose is quite lovely, offering up scents of green apple, lemon, salty minerality, a touch of leesiness and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full and nicely mineral in personality, with a good core, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the slightly clamped down finish. This is a very good, entry level Albariño from one of the top estates in the region, but the screwcap is messing with the wine already. 2019-2023. **87.**

2017 Albariño “Mar de Viñas”- Adegas Gran Vinum (Rías Biaxas)

The Albariño “Mar de Viñas” from Adegas Gran Vinum is one of their entry level wines and it is very well made for its price point. The 2017 version is bright and classy on the nose, offering up a vibrant blend of lime, tart pear, a touch of menthol, lovely minerality and a bit of ocean breeze in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with zesty acids, a good core of fruit, fine mineral drive and a long, balanced and complex finish. This is very good Albariño! 2019-2030. **90.**

2017 Albariño “Essencia Diviña”- Adegas Gran Vinum (Rías Biaxas)

The 2017 Albariño “Essencia Diviña” from Adegas Gran Vinum is happily sealed under natural cork and is a step up in terms of precision and roundness. The bouquet is bright and classy, wafting from the glass in a blend of tart orange, lime blossoms, ocean breeze, lovely minerality, dried flowers and a hint of gentle leesiness. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and beautifully detailed, with a good core of fruit, zesty acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and gently briny finish. This is first class Albariño! 2019-2030+. **91.**

2017 Albariño “Selección Especial”- Adegas Gran Vinum (Rías Biaxas)

The Albariño “Selección Especial” from Adegas Gran Vinum hails from fifty year-old vines. It is given five months aging on its fine lees, with weekly stirrings, prior to bottling. The 2017 version is beautifully complex and detailed, offering up a complex bouquet of grapefruit, tart orange, gentle leesy tones, sea salts, stony minerality, lemongrass and a bit of oceanic brininess in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and focused, with a lovely core, impressive complexity and a long, vibrant and classy finish. This seems to be more user-friendly out of the blocks than the 2016 rendition (please see note below) and this is the vintage I would opt for drinking first, though both years are outstanding and will age long and gracefully. 2019-2035. **92+.**

2017 Albariño “Cies”- Bodegas Rodrigo Méndez (Meaño- Rías Biaxas)

The 2017 Albariño “Cies” from Rodrigo Méndez is fermented entirely with indigenous yeasts, with half of the cuvée barrel-fermented (without temperature control) and raised in old oak *foudres*, with the other half raised in stainless steel. This vineyard dates back to 1954. The 2017 Cies delivers a fine bouquet of lemon, tart orange, briny oceanic notes, stony minerality,

gentle leesy tones and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and vibrant, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is top flight, old school Albariño! 2018-2030. **92.**

2017 Albariño “Leirana”- Bodegas Rodrigo Méndez (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

The Leirana bottling of Albariño from Rodrigo Méndez is raised entirely in stainless steel, though some of the cuvée is fermented in old *foudres*. These vines are not quite as old as those in his Cies bottling, as this vineyard was planted in 1967. The 2017 version of Leirana is a fine bottle of Albariño, offering up a bright and complex bouquet of sweet grapefruit, wet stone minerality, white flowers, lovely lees tones, orange peel and a bit of ocean breeze. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and snappy, with a superb core, excellent soil signature and a long, youthful and complex finish. A very fine example. 2018-2030. **91.**

2017 Albariño “Dandelion”- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

The 2017 Albariño “Dandelion” from Alberto Nanclares is another lovely bottle, offering up a vibrant bouquet of fresh lime, bread fruit, a touch of menthol, ocean breeze, lemongrass and a fine base of stony minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with excellent delineation and balance, bright, zesty acids and fine length and grip on the complex and bouncy finish. This is Alberto’s entry level Albariño and it is stunning quality for a basic bottling! 2018-2030. **92.**

2017 Albariño- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

As I have mentioned in the past, the very talented Alberto Nanclares is based in the Val do Salnés, which is the same sub-region of Rías Baixas where the Godfather of Albariño, Paco Dovaló has his small estate. The 2017 Albariño from Señor Nanclares is produced from vines that range from thirty to sixty years of age and it is a bit more mineral-infused and overtly structured than the Tempus Vivendi bottling, but shows stellar promise. The youthful bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of green apple, lime peel, briny overtones, stony minerality, a touch of leanness and a gentle topnote of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and full-bodied, with laser-like focus and grip, a rock solid core, superb minerality and a very long, racy and perfectly balanced finish. This is approachable, but still in climbing mode and I would try to let it be for a year or two before having at it in earnest. 2019-2035. **93+.**

2017 Albariño “Tempus Vivendi”- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

The 2017 Albariño “Tempus Vivendi” from Alberto Nanclares is very expressive on the nose and palate, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a nicely oceanic blend of pear, lime peel, menthol, stony minerality, dried flowers, a touch of leanness and ocean breeze. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish, focused and very extroverted in personality, with excellent intensity of flavor, fine mineral drive and a long, zesty and complex finish of serious pedigree. This is quite open out of the blocks and is delicious right now, but the backend energy and grip is fantastic and this wine will clearly age very nicely. 2018-2030. **93.**

2017 Albariño “Serea”- Adega Pedra Longa (Rías Baixas)

The 2017 Albariño “Serea” from Adega Pedra Longa is a pretty, young wine offering up a primary bouquet of grapefruit, gentle leesy tones, a bit of lime peel, stony minerality and a touch of briny ocean breeze. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and quite solid at the core, with bright acids, good focus and grip and a long, primary finish. This is not yet showing much complexity, but that will come when the wine has a chance to stretch its legs a bit with a touch more bottle age. 2019-2030. **88+.**

2016 Albariño “Selección Especial”- Adegas Gran Vinum (Rías Biaxas)

The 2016 Albariño “Selección Especial” from Adegas Gran is excellent, offering up a fine aromatic constellation of grapefruit, bread fruit, stony minerality, ocean breeze, a touch of leanness and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is focused, full-bodied and nascently complex, with outstanding depth at the core, lovely, vibrant acids and great balance and grip on the long, poised and very classy finish. This is still a young wine and will be even better with a few years in the cellar. Fine juice. 2020-2035. **92+**.

2016 Albariño “Leirana Finca Genoveva”- Rodrigo Mendez (Val do Salnés- Rías Biaxas)

The 2016 Albariño “Leirana Finca Genoveva” from Rodrigo Mendez is seriously and old vine bottling, as these ancient, tree trunk vines were planted all the way back in 1862! The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts in four year-old, large *foudres* and spends a year on its fine lees in stainless steel tanks prior to bottling. The 2016 is excellent, offering up a pure and vibrant bouquet of fresh lime, bread fruit, complex, granitic minerality, sea salts, dried flowers and a gentle touch of lees. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and complex, with a quite refined profile, a good core, fine backend mineral drive and impressive cut and grip on the focused and zesty finish. This is very good Albariño! 2019-2030+. **91+**.



2016 Albariño “Paraje Mina”- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Biaxas)

The 2016 Albariño from the vineyard of Paraje Mina from Bodegas Alberto Nanclares is a deep, young and very mineral-infused example, delivering a promising bouquet of lime,

menthol, ocean breeze, wet stone minerality, lemongrass and a bit of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, mineral-driven and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, good acids and lovely length and grip on the still fairly primary finish. This is starting to blossom nicely on the palate, but is still pretty adolescent on the nose and more complexity is bound to come with further bottle age. Good juice. 2019-2030. **91+**.

2016 Albariño “Soverribas”- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

The Soverribas bottling from Alberto Nanclares hails from a thirty year-old vineyard in Meaño. The wine spends a year aging on its fine lees in a ten year-old *foudre* and then an additional year and a half in bottle, so the 2016 is the new release. The wine is outstanding, delivering a fine nose of tart orange, lime peel, mineral salinity, dried flowers, lemongrass and a gentle touch of leesy overtones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and mineral-driven, with an excellent core, bright, zesty acids and great length and grip on the complex and still quite youthful finish. This lovely Albariño is going to age long and gracefully! 2018-2035. **92+**.

2016 Albariño “A Graña”- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

The 2016 Albariño “A Graña” bottling from Alberto Nanclares sees a bit of new oak in its *elevage*, albeit in eight hundred liter casks. The wine offers up excellent complexity on the nose, which shows a very discreet touch of vanillin oak to go along with scents of white peach, lime blossoms, a touch of tart orange, lovely soil tones, *fleur de sel* and white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with great mineral drive, bright acids and a very long, energetic and complex finish. The oak influence here is very, very delicate and does not do anything but add another layer of complexity to a beautifully transparent and vibrant example of Albariño. Great juice. 2018-2030. **93**.

2016 Albariño “Coccinella” Cepas Vellas- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Meaño)

The 2016 old vine bottling of Coccinella from Alberto Nanclares is utterly superb on both the nose and palate. Readers may recall that this vineyard is over one hundred years of age and planted on its own rootstock, in sandy soils that face west towards the Atlantic Ocean. The wine spends a year aging on its fine lees prior to bottling and is given another year of bottle age prior to release. The bouquet of the 2016 is still tightly coiled and very promising, offering up a youthful constellation of tart orange, sweet grapefruit, a touch of wild fennel, ocean breeze, salty soil tones, dried flowers and a very refined touch of leesy. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a superb core of fruit, great mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the long and beautifully balanced finish. Albariño occasionally gets this good in the hands of someone like Paco Doval, but it never gets better! This is still a puppy and deserves a few more years in the cellar to completely blossom. Great, great Albariño! 2020-2040. **95**.

2016 Crisopa Branco Tradicional- Bodegas Alberto Nanclares (Cambados- Rías Baixas)

The 2016 Crisopa Branco Tradicional from Alberto Nanclares hails from the same parcel of ancient vines that produce the Albariño Coccinella bottling, but Señor Nanclares crafts this wine quite differently, foot-trodding the bunches, including twenty-five percent whole clusters and allowing for a fifteen day skin maceration that gives the wine a pale touch of pink color. The wine offers up a deep and quite unique bouquet of tart orange, citrus peel, stony minerality, ocean brine and an exotic touch of cherry skin. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core of fruit, fine minerality and a bit of tannin perking up the long and vibrant finish. I have never encountered a wine made in this manner from Albariño and it is

fascinating, but it is not going to replace today's modern version of Albariño anytime soon! 2018-2030. **88.**

2016 Albariño “Atelier”- Raúl Pérez (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

The 2016 Albariño “Atelier” from Raúl Pérez is an excellent bottle, with just a touch of oak shading both its nose and palate. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up scents of green apple, lime peel, salty, wet stone minerality, white flowers and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with excellent mid-palate intensity, bright, zesty acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. Purists may object to the touch of oakiness in the personality here, but it is done with such a soft touch that I can do nothing but applaud. This is excellent Albariño! 2018-2030. **93.**

2016 Albariño- Lagar de Pintos (Val do Salnés- Rías Baixas)

The 2016 Albariño from Marta Castro's Lagar de Pintos is an outstanding example of this varietal. The wine is fermented in stainless steel and spends six months of aging on its fine lees prior to bottling. The 2016 vintage is the current release and offers up a superb nose of lemon, bread fruit, gentle leesy tones, citrus peel, stony minerality, dried flowers and a discreetly briny topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, brisk and rock solid at the core, with excellent cut and grip, lovely focus and a long, complex and vibrant finish. This is outstanding, old school Albariño that is just starting to blossom and will be even better with a few more years of bottle age! 2018-2030+. **93.**

2016 Vimbio Blanco- Adegas do Vimbio (Martín Crusat) Rías Baixas

The 2016 Vimbio Blanco from Martín Crusat is composed of a blend of Albariño, Caiño Branco and Loureiro. The wine delivers a complex and quite beautiful aromatic landscape of tart orange, a bit of pear, raw almond, beeswax, beautiful soil tones, gentle brininess, lime peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, excellent backend mineral drive and a long, complex and emphatic finish. This is a superb wine. 2019-2030+. **92.**

2015 Albariño- Lagar de Broullón (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

The granitic soils of the Lagar de Broullón Albariño always make for a racy and nicely structured example of this underrated varietal, and the 2015 is no exception. The nose here wafts from the glass in a fine mix of yellow fruit, powdered stone, ocean breeze, lemongrass, a touch of leanness and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and quite long on the backend, with a good core, fine stony soil signature and lovely cut and grip on the classy finish. Good juice. 2018-2025. **92.**

2015 Albariño- Lagar de Candes (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

The 2015 Albariño from Eulogio Gondar's Lagar de Candes is an excellent example of this vintage and is now drinking beautifully, offering up a bright and nicely citric nose of lime, lemon, ocean breeze, complex, salty minerality, dried flowers and a bit of candied citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and mineral-driven, with a good core, fine bounce and grip and a long, zesty and complex finish. This is still a pretty young wine at three years of age and will be even better with a bit more bottle age. Fine juice. 2018-2030+. **92+.**

2015 Albariño “Baenís”- Martín Crusat (Rías Baixas)

The 2015 Albariño “Baenís” from Martín Crusat is beautifully expressive on the nose, delivering a fine constellation of lime, breadfruit, sea salts, lemongrass, stony minerality and a discreet topnote of menthol. On the palate the wine is full, bright and complex, with a good core,

lovely mineral drive, good acids and a long, complex and well-balanced finish that closes with a note of lime peel. Good juice and very much a food-friendly bottling. 2018-2028. **90.**

2015 Albariño “Tête de Cuvée”- Envidiacolina (Rías Baixas)

The “Tête de Cuvée” version of Albariño from Envidiacolina is their extended lees aging bottling and the 2015 is still showing quite solid today. The wine shows some age in its darker color, but offers up a bright and complex nose of tangerine, citrus peel, ocean breeze, a good base of salty soil tones and a topnote of gentle leanness. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and nicely mature today, with a good core, still very good acids and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is not overly complex, but offers good depth and personality with its extended aging. I should mention that this wine is sealed with a plastic cork and perhaps the darker color here is emblematic of a wine not pristinely sealed? 2018-2023. **88.**

2015 Albariño “O’Forrollo”- Bodega Meis Otero (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

The 2015 Albariño from Fernando Meis Otero is a gorgeous wine that is really just starting to hit its peak at three years of age. The bouquet offers up a gorgeous blend of apple, lemon, white flowers, ocean breeze, lime zest and a superb base of minerality. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and quite elegant, with a good core, superb backend mineral drive and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is outstanding Albariño! 2018-2035+. **94.**

2015 Albariño “Amodiño” Lías Trés Añadas- Eladio Piñeiro (Rías Baixas)

The 2015 Albariño “Amodiño” Lías Trés Añadas from Eladio Piñeiro is outstanding on both the nose and palate and with three years of bottle age is really hitting its apogee. The deep and complex bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of peach, orange peel, salty minerality, lovely lees tones, dried flowers and just a whisper of wild fennel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and plenty deep at the core, with fine mineral drive, very good focus and grip and a long, vibrant finish. This really has fine mid-palate depth from its extended time on its fine lees and is a first rate Albariño. 2018-2025+. **92.**

2013 Albariño- Cabaleiro do Val (Meaño- Rías Baixas)

I first tasted a bottle of the 2013 Albariño from Cabaleiro do Val during my visit to the region back in the autumn of 2014, when this was the upcoming release from Paco Dovalo. I have followed the wine closely ever since and it continues to age gracefully and drink with vibrant complexity and lovely mineral undertow. Today, the wine is at its apogee, offering up a fresh as a daisy bouquet of lime, green apple, wet stone, lovely lees elements and a briny topnote of ocean breeze. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite racy, with a fine core, impressive backend mineral drive and excellent length and grip on the zesty and perfectly balanced finish. Truly stellar Albariño. 2018-2035+. **94+.**

2013 Albariño- Frore de Carme (Rías Baixas) Vinolok

The 2013 Albariño from Frore de Carme was aged two years on its fine lees prior to bottling. The 2013 version offers up a deep and complex nose of candied limepeel, wet stone minerality, lemongrass, hints of menthol and a bit of sea salts. On the palate the wine is quite reductive, but has retained all of its freshness and bounce, just seems to be locked in presently to a sort of suspended animation. The finish is long and vibrant, but it seems like all of this wine’s development occurred during its two years on its fine lees and it has just been caught in time while in bottle. It is still not bad, but this might be stunning under a natural cork. 2019-2025+. **88.**



Hundred-plus year-old Albariño vines in Meaño.

2013 Albariño- Lagar de Broullón (Meaño- Rías Biaxas)

The 2013 Albariño from Lagar de Broullón is another wine that I first tasted when in Galicia in October of 2014, and it has also been a lovely wine to drink ever since it was first released. Today, the wine is still at the top of its game and has plenty of life still ahead of it, as it wafts from the glass in a complex aromatic constellation of bread fruit, leesy tones, plenty of smokiness, a fine base of minerality, orange peel and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully focused, with fine cut and grip, impeccable balance and a long, vibrant and classy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2030. **94.**

2013 Albariño- Adega Rozas (Meaño- Rías Biaxas)

Manolo Dovalo has very old vines, with a great many well over one hundred years of age, and these add mid-palate depth to all of his Albariños. His 2013 Albariño is drinking beautifully at five years of age and is really coming into its apogee of peak maturity. The bouquet is pure, complex and quite refined, offering up scents of tart orange, bread fruit, lime peel, briny ocean breeze, very complex minerality, gentle smokiness and a blossoming note of leesy sweet nuttiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with good acids, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and now nicely tertiary finish. This is not going to realize quite the same longevity of the Cabaleiro do Val

bottling from 2013, but it is aging nicely and is now at a lovely plateau of peak maturity and drinking very well indeed. 2018-2023. **92.**

Rías Baixas Tinto

2016 Tinto DoUmia- Adega Pedralonga

The Tinto DoUmia from Adega Pedralonga is composed of a blend of seventy percent Mencía, twenty percent Caíño and ten percent Espadeiro. It is fermented and raised in stainless steel and sees no oak at all during its *elevage*, with the 2016 vintage coming in at a cool twelve percent octane. The wine offers up a lovely bouquet of cassis, pomegranate, tree bark, dark soil tones, chicory, graphite and just a whisper of exotic botanicals. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and tangy, with a good core of fruit, a lovely attack and a complex, modestly tannic and long, tangy backend that asks for a bit of bottle age before broaching. With decanting, this wine is certainly quite tasty today, but more complexity will emerge if one gives it just a couple of years in the cellar. A lovely middleweight. 2020-2040. **90.**

Galicia

2016 Gavela da Vila Blanco- Daterra Viticultores (Laura Lorenzo) Ourense

The Gavela da Vila from Laura Lorenzo is composed entirely of Palomino, from vines that happen to be eighty to one hundred and twenty years of age! The soils here are primarily granite, with some other decomposing stone and clay interspersed. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts in a combination of older French oak *barriques* and chestnut cask. The 2016 Gavela da Vila offers up a superb nose of peach, a touch of orange peel, gentle notes of walnut, salty minerality, wild fennel and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with lovely transparency, fine balance and grip and a long, vibrant and soil-driven finish. This reminds me quite a bit of a Palomino bottling I had from Goyo García several years ago, albeit with completely different soil signature. Fine, fine juice! 2019-2025+. **91.**

2012 San Paio- J. L. Mateo García (Ourense)

The 2012 San Paio from J. L. Mateo García is listed as from the sub-region of Montaña, which I assume is on the doorstep of Ribeira Sacra, but I am not certain of this. I could not find any information on the importer's website about the wine and assume it is a new producer for them, and there was nothing available on the web about the winemaker or winery. However, despite the air of mystery, this is very good wine. The bouquet smells like there is plenty of Mencía in the blend (and probably some Alicante Bouschet as well), as it offers up a complex nose of black cherries, pomegranate, lead pencil, slate, autumnal leafy tones and a touch of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, soil-driven and nicely light on its feet, with a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. This is starting to drink well, but is still in climbing mode and will be even better with a few more years in the cellar. Fine juice and nicely low octane at 12.5 percent. 2018-2040+. **91.**

Monterrei

2017 Godello- Fraga do Corvo

The 2017 Godello from Fraga do Corvo is an excellent example of this lovely varietal. The bouquet is bright and classy, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of pear, a touch of white peach, gently musky floral tones, a fine base of white soil, fresh almond and a floral

topnote redolent of white lilies. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and wide open and succulent, with a lovely core, excellent soil signature, sound acids and fine length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is excellent Godello. 2018-2025. **92.**

2015 Alanda Blanco- Bodegas Quinta de Muradella

Bodegas Quinta de Muradella is the brainchild of José Luis Mateo, who is the winemaker and owner of this small winery just north of the Portuguese border in Monterrei. His Alanda Blanco is comprised of a blend of thirty percent each of Doña Blanco, Verdejo and Treixadura and ten percent of Monstruosa de Monterrei (not a grape I am familiar with). The vineyard's soil is a mixture of granite, slate and clay and the wine is fermented and raised in stainless steel. The 2015 Alanda Blanco offers up a beautifully expressive nose of fresh lime, menthol, a dollop of green olive, wild fennel, dried flowers and a complex base of minerality. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and drinking beautifully, with fine mid-palate depth, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is really good! 2018-2025. **91.**

2015 Godello- Adegas Triay

Antonio Triay makes beautiful Godello, with his bottling including five percent each of Albariño and Treixadura in the *cépages* for added complexity. The 2015 version is drinking beautifully today, offering up a pure and complex nose of desiccated apples and pears, a touch of honeycomb, lovely, stony minerality and a topnote of lime peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with fine mid-palate depth, bright acids and focus, cut and grip on the long and vibrant finish. This is a very good bottle of Godello and an absolute bargain! 2018-2023+. **92.**

2013 Gorvia Blanco- Bodegas Quinta de Muradella

The Gorvia Blanco bottling from Bodegas Quinta de Muradella is composed entirely of Doña Blanco, from a vineyard planted in the second half of the 1980s on a bed of decomposed slate and clay at four hundred and twenty meters above sea level. The vineyard has been farmed organically for many years. The wine is raised in three year-old, five hundred liter French barrels for eight months prior to bottling and the 2013 vintage is the current release. The wine offers up a fine bouquet of pear, beeswax, a very good base of soil, a touch of green olive and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite long, with excellent depth at the core, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and well-balanced finish. I do not have a lot of experience aging Doña Blanco, but based on this wine, it seems that this is quite a long-lived varietal, at least when grown at elevation, as this wine has years and years still ahead of it! 2018-2028+. **90+.**

2012 Fisterra Tinto- Bodegas Quinta de Muradella

The Fisterra Tinto from Bodegas Quinta de Muradella is composed of a blend of thirty percent each of Mencía, Bastardo and Mouraton, with the final ten percent in the cuvée made up of Garnacha Tintorera. The vineyard was planted between 1930 and 1950, so these are good old vines. The wine includes one-third whole clusters and is raised in older *foudres* for fourteen months prior to bottling. The 2012 Fisterra Tinto comes in at a cool 12.5 percent octane and delivers a lovely bouquet of dark berries, pomegranate, chicory, a touch of tree bark, a beautiful base of soil tones and a nice hint of licorice in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, complex and beautifully soil-driven, with a good core, tangy acids and fine focus and grip on the moderately tannic finish. Despite this wine already being six years old, it is still

fairly youthful and will continue to improve with further bottle age. I love the aromatic complexity this wine is showing already, but the palate has not quite caught up with the nose and I would still tuck it away for a few more years in the cellar and let it blossom completely. A fine middleweight in the making. 2021-2045+. **89+**.

Ribeiro Blanco

2017 Eira Dos Mouros Blanco- Bodegas Casel de Armán

The 2017 Eira Dos Mouros from Bodegas Casel de Armán is composed entirely of Treixadura and offers up a refined bouquet of fresh lime, a touch of green olive, salty minerality, dried flowers and a topnote of wild fennel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, lovely mineral drive and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2019-2030+. **91**.

2016 Finca Os Loureiros “Edición Limitada”- Bodegas Casel de Armán

I think this is the 2016 vintage, but for the life of me, I cannot find a vintage date anywhere on the front or back label! In any case, the back label states that this is “Batch L-01” and the wine is composed entirely of Treixadura and is aged in five hundred liter French casks. The bouquet here is excellent, jumping from the glass in a blend of tart orange, limepeel, salty minerality, white flowers and a very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and focused, with outstanding depth at the core, lovely soil signature and a bit more of a new oaky personality on the backend than the nose suggests. However, the wine is impeccably balanced and just superb. 2019-2030+. **93**.

2016 Finca Misenhora “Edición Limitada”- Bodegas Casel de Armán

As is the case with the above wine, I am surmising that this is from the 2016 vintage, but there is no supporting documentation on the bottle or cork! The Finca Misenhora bottling is a blend of ninety percent Treixadura and five percent each of Godello and Albariño and is aged for a six month period on its fine lees, but in stainless steel tanks, rather than in larger French barrels. The wine offers up an excellent bouquet of fresh lime, tart pear, a touch of green olive, beautiful minerality, raw almond and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and classy finish. This is fine juice. 2019-2025. **92**.

2016 Viña de Martín “Os Pasás” Blanco- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The Viña de Martín “Os Pasás” from Luis Rodríguez is his entry level white wine, made primarily from Treixadura, with small percentages of Lado, Albariño and Torrontés included in the blend. These are not old vines by Señor Rodríguez’s standards, as they range from ten to twenty-five years of age and are planted on steep, granite hillsides. The wine is fermented and raised in stainless steel. The 2016 version is a lovely middleweight, offering up a bright and complex bouquet of pear, pink grapefruit, salty minerality, white flowers and just a hint of green olive in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, fullish, complex and beautifully balanced, with fine intensity of flavor, lovely focus and grip and a long, vibrant and very classy finish. This is lovely juice. 2018-2030. **91**.



2015 Chánselus “Castes Brancas” Blanco- Bernardo Estévez (Ribeiro)

The “regular bottling” of Chánselus Blanco (as opposed to the old vines) from Bernardo Estévez is made from a field blend of Lado, Treixadura, Silberilla, Albillo, Loureiro and Verdejo (though primarily the first two varietals). The wine is barrel-fermented in old French *demi-muids* and one ancient, chestnut *foudre* that used to belong to Bernardo’s grandfather. The wine is aged for ten months prior to bottling, and then an additional fourteen months in bottle prior to release. The 2015 Castes Brancas offers up a complex nose of lemon, pear, stony soil tones, a bit of beeswax, white flowers and a touch of green olive in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very well-balanced, with a superb core, excellent focus and grip and a touch of vanillin oak shading the finish, despite the fact that the wine is aged only in quite old casks! Fine juice. 2019-2030+. **92+**.

2015 Chánselus “Cepas Vellas” Blanco- Bernardo Estévez (Ribeiro)

The 2015 Chánselus Blanco from Bernardo Estévez is composed of a blend of Lado, Treixadura, Albillo, Godello and Verdejo, which are barrel-fermented and raised in older French barrels. The wine delivers a deep and complex bouquet of white peach, pear, a touch of green olive, wild fennel, dried flowers, a very discreet base of vanillin oak and salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with great mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and a very long, complex and racy finish. This is an absolutely dynamite wine that shows every possibility of aging well for a couple of decades and improving with bottle age. 2018-2040+. **94**.

2015 A Teixeira Blanco- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The 2015 A Teixeira from Luis Rodríguez is simply outstanding. Readers may recall that this cuvée is also primarily Treixadura, with a bit of Godello and Albariño included in the blend. The wine is fermented and aged in old, large *foudres* for one year, with an additional year of bottle age added in the cellars prior to release. The 2015 A Teixeira offers up a superb bouquet of pear, lemon peel, stony minerality, gently musky notes of spring flowers, a hint of butter (not from oak!) and a bit of citrus oil in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and focused, with a rock solid core of fruit, great backend mineral drive, bright acids and outstanding focus and grip on the long, elegant and nascently complex finish. This is still a young wine at age three and will be even better five years or more down the road. That said, it is gorgeous to drink right now and it is going to be very difficult to leave it alone in the cellar and let it blossom with further bottle age! 2018-2040+. **94.**

2015 Viña de Martín “Os Pasás” Blanco- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The 2015 Viña de Martín “Os Pasás” Blanco from Luis Rodríguez is outstanding on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is deep, complex and showing some signs of secondary development in its mélange of lemon peel, tart pear, beeswax, salty soil tones, a touch of green olive, menthol and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, superb soil signature, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and vibrant finish. This is a beautiful bottle of wine and clearly shows why Señor Rodríguez is one of the brightest stars in Ribeiro! 2018-2035+. **93.**

2014 Finca Teira Blanco- Bodegas Manuel Formigo (Ribeiro)

The 2014 Finca Teira Blanco from Manuel Formigo is drinking beautifully at age four and is just now entering its plateau of peak drinkability. The wine is a blend of seventy percent Treixadura, twenty percent Godello and ten percent Torrentés, raised in stainless steel. The 2014 offers up a complex and beautifully expressive nose of pear, citrus peel, smoky overtones, a hint of new leather, stony minerality and a whisper of honeycomb just starting to peak out in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and absolutely *à point*, with a lovely core, still excellent acidity and superb length and grip on the poised and well-balanced finish. This is at its peak today, but still has at least another decade of life in it! 2018-2028. **92.**

2014 Teira X- Bodegas Manuel Formigo (Ribeiro)

The Teira X bottling from Manuel Formigo is his older vine cuvée, with some of the vineyards used for this an old-fashioned field blend, so the *cépages* here is sixty percent Treixadura (from thirty year-old vines), fifteen percent each of Alvilla and Albariño and ten percent Loureira. The 2014 is again right into its sweet spot in its evolution, offering up a fine bouquet of pear, apple, wet stone minerality, citrus zest and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full, complex and still rock solid at the core, with great cut and grip, lovely focus and a long, complex and vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2018-2025+. **92.**

2012 Viña de Martín “Escolma” Blanco- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The 2012 vintage of Viña de Martín “Escolma” from Luis Rodríguez is the current release, as this wine is given a year in the cellar on its fine lees in a variety of sizes of older casks and *foudres*, followed by fully three years of additional bottle age in the cellar before release. This is a beautiful wine with the aromatic depth of a grand cru white Burgundy, offering up a refined blend of pear, quince, dried flowers, a discreet note of beeswax, beautifully complex minerality, a touch of *fleur de sel* and just a whisper of vanilla from the older casks. On the

palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a rock solid core, great soil signature, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, very pure and complex finish. The backend grip and energy are stunning! This is one of Spain's greatest white wines. 2018-2045. **95.**

Ribeiro Tinto

2016 Xanledo- Viñedos do Gabián (Pepe Pereiro) (Ribeiro)

The 2016 Xanledo from Viñedos do Gabián is a lovely middleweight. The wine is produced by Raul Perez's assistant winemaker, Pepe Pereiro, who planted the Gabián vineyard in 2011 to a mix of Brancellao, Caiño and Suelo Sábrego. The vineyard is a three *hectare* amphitheater on a base of decomposing granite. As his vines are still very young, he purchases most of his needs for this bottling presently from local growers and then fermenting the wine with indigenous yeasts and raising it in an assortment of older oak barrels. The 2016 Xanledo is nicely low in alcohol, coming in at twelve percent and offering up a bright and complex nose of dark berries, tree bark, woodsmoke, a bit of chicory, dark soil tones and lovely botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, tangy and very nicely transparent, with impressive intensity of flavor, bright acids, modest tannins and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This is really a terrific wine that should age very nicely for fifteen years or so, but is going to be awfully hard to keep one's hands off of in its delicious youth. 2018-2035. **92.**

2016 La Senda "1984"- Diego Losada (Ribeiro)

Diego Losada only started producing his own wines in the 2013 vintage, after working for a few years at other local wineries. Though Diego's university degree is in Organic Chemistry, he seeks to make wines in as non-interventionist a method as possible and farms his vineyards organically. His "1984" bottling is composed entirely of Mencía, from three old vineyards that he purchased grapes from and which range from sixty to more than ninety years of age. These old bush vines are planted at six hundred and fifty meters above sea level, making them amongst the very highest elevation vineyards in the D.O. of Bierzo. The 2016 version is 12.5 percent in octane and offers up a beautifully expressive nose of sweet blackberries, pomegranate, bitter chocolate, slate, coffee grounds and a wisp of violet in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely sappy at the core, with fine mineral drive, ripe, moderate tannins, lovely acidity and excellent balance and grip on the long, complex and vibrant finish. This is already drinking with grace and generosity, but it has room to grow as the tannins recede a bit and will be even better with bottle age. 2018-2040+. **92+.**

2016 La Senda "La Barbacana"- Diego Losada (Ribeiro)

Diego Losada's La Barbacana bottling is from a single vineyard of the same name that is planted with one hundred year-old vines, with ninety percent of the vines being Garnacha Tintorera and ten percent Mencía. The vineyard sits up high at six hundred and fifty meters above sea level, on a mineral-infused bed of slate, quartz and iron. The wine is fermented in old chestnut vats and raised in chestnut *foudres* for nine months, prior to bottling without fining or filtration. The 2016 La Barbacana is a beautiful bottle of wine, offering up a deep and very complex nose of dark berries, cassis, bonfire, a bit of tree bark, beautiful soil tones, chicory and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and tangy, with a lovely core, great soil signature, moderate tannins, excellent grip and a long, focused and very classy finish. This is bottled without any added SO₂ and has some of the wildness of a natural wine, with just a touch of volatile acidity, but the wine is so beautifully complex that I am very happy to forgive it for its bit of VA on the backend and drink it with wild abandon. I do not have any

sense of how it will age over the long haul, given its low sulfur regimen, but there is easily a decade of enjoyment here before one need find out. 2018-2028+. **93.**

2016 Poza Vella Tinto- Alberto Nanclares (Ribeiro)

The Poza Vella Tinto from Alberto Nanclares is made from a blend of Brancellao, Caiño Longo, Sousón and Ferrón. The 2016 version offers up a refined bouquet of sweet dark berries, a touch of tree bark, cola, complex, dark soil tones, violets and a bit of coffee grounds. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, transparent and beautifully light on its feet, with good intensity of flavor, lovely focus and grip, just a bit of tannin and a long, complex finish. This wine is only twelve percent alcohol and is a lovely, complex middleweight. 2018-2040. **89.**

2016 Eidos Ermos- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The Eidos Ermos bottling from Luis Rodríguez is his young vine red wine, made for earlier drinking and raised in a combination of older Burgundy barrels and stainless steel tanks. The *cépages* is younger vine Caiño, Brancellao, Sousón and Ferrol, which were planted by *Señor* Rodríguez himself from *selection massale* cuttings. The 2016 Eidos Ermos is a wonderfully expressive and aromatic middleweight, coming in at twelve percent octane and offering up a complex bouquet of dark berries, pomegranate, pepper, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, espresso, tree bark and *garrigue*. On the palate the wine is medium-full, complex and beautifully balanced, with a generous attack, a good core, modest tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused and vibrant finish. Good juice. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2015 Poza Vella Tinto- Alberto Nanclares (Ribeiro)

The 2015 Poza Vella Tinto from Alberto Nanclares is a bit riper than the 2016 version, as this wine comes in at 13.3 percent octane and is quite a bit darker in color and noteworthy for the electric violet rim on the wine. The bouquet is deep, sappy and quite elegant, offering up scents of black raspberries, cassis, coffee grounds, cola, dark soil tones and balsam boughs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with quite a bit of sturdy, chewy tannins, fine focus and grip, fairly low acids and a long, youthfully complex and nicely soil-driven finish. Whereas the 2016 version is drinking beautifully out of the blocks, the 2015 Poza Vella needs some time in the cellar to allow these tannins to soften up a bit. The wine should be very good when it is ready to drink, but bury it for a while. 2024-2055. **88+.**

2015 A Torna dos Pasás- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The 2015 A Torna dos Pasás from Luis Rodríguez is composed of a blend of traditional Galician red grapes, with the *cépages* consisting of Brancellao, Caiño and Ferrol. The vines are planted on steep, south-facing granite sites and the wine is aged in old, three hundred liter barrels. The 2015 A Torna dos Pasas is nicely cool, as is typical of this bottling, coming in at 12.5 percent octane and offering up a beautiful bouquet of black cherries, sweet cassis, espresso, a touch of tree bark, a complex base of dark soil tones, savory elements and a bit of cigar smoke in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, tangy, full-bodied and focused, with a sappy core of black fruit, superb soil signature, vibrant acids, moderate tannins and impeccable balance on the long and complex finish. This is already very easy to drink now, but will be even better down the road. 2018-2040+. **92+.**

2014 A Torna dos Pasás- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

The 2014 A Torna dos Pasás from Luis Rodríguez is an excellent wine, offering up impressive complexity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a

sophisticated blend of sweet dark berries, tree bark, a bit of bonfire, espresso, dark soils, a lovely touch of botanicals and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and a bit more structured than the 2015 version, with a good core of fruit, excellent transparency, moderate tannins and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This is a slightly leaner vintage than the 2015 and consequently, the wine could do with just a bit of bottle age prior to starting to drink it with abandon. It will end up being a very complex, soil-driven and classy bottle, but give it a couple of years to blossom. 2021-2040+. **91.**

2013 Abadía de Gomariz- María Álvarez Serrano (Ribeiro)

The 2013 Abadía de Gomariz from María Álvarez Serrano is composed of a unique blend of fifty percent Sousón, thirty percent Brancellao and ten percent each of Ferrol and Mencía. The wine is beautifully complex aromatically, offering up a black fruity bouquet of dark berries, cassis, a touch of tree bark, black licorice, a beautifully complex base of slate minerality, gentle smokiness and a dollop of refined botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and supremely elegant, with a lovely core of sappy black fruit, excellent soil signature, moderate tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and beautifully balanced finish. This is still a fairly young wine and deserves a bit more time in the cellar to resolve its tannins, but it is going to be excellent when it is fully ready to drink! 2022-2050+. **92+.**

2012 A Torna dos Pasás “Escolma”- Luis Rodríguez Vázquez (Ribeiro)

As I have mentioned previously, the A Torna dos Pasás “Escolma” cuvée from Luis Rodríguez is made up of a field blend of old vine Caiño, Brancellao and Ferrol and is raised in a mixture of new and older French oak casks. The wine ages twelve months in barrel prior to bottling and then sees an additional three years in bottle in Señor Rodríguez’s cellars prior to release. The 2012 Escolma is the new release from this outstanding winery and it is excellent, offering up a complex and vibrant bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, tree bark, espresso, spit-roasted game, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full and focused, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, moderate, well-measured tannins and superb length and grip on the well-balanced and complex finish. This has the weight of a grand cru Burgundy and the classic aromatic and flavor profile of great Galician red wines. It is approachable today, but still could do with a bit more bottle age to allow the tannins to soften up just a bit more. A superb wine. 2021-2055. **94.**

Ribeira Sacra Blanco

2017 Guímaro Blanco (Ribeira Sacra)

The regular bottling of Guímaro Blanco (there is also an old vine cuvée) is made Godello, which is raised in stainless steel. The 2017 version offers up lovely purity and style in its aromatic constellation of pear, lemon peel, salty soil tones, a touch of wild fennel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and nicely transparent, with lovely focus and grip, a good core and fine bounce on the long and complex finish. This is made for early drinking and has plenty of charm right out of the blocks, but the balance is here to also keep nicely in the cellar, at least over the mid-term. 2018-2030. **90.**

2014 Godello- Cividade (Adega Verao- Amandi)

The 2014 Godello from Cividade is drinking beautifully and has opened up to reveal an additional layer of complexity since I last tried a bottle early in 2017. The wine is still fairly

youthful on both the nose and palate, as this is made for the long haul, but it is drinking with distinction today and is lovely on the nose, which offers up scents of pear, lime zest, smoky overtones, wet stone minerality, lemongrass and a touch of salinity in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a fine girdle of acidity, superb focus and grip and a very long, complex and vibrant finish. This is stellar Godello and really showing well today. 2018-2035. **94+**.

2014 Sabatellus Blanco (Chantada)

Primitivo Lareu's beautiful Sabatellus winery lies in the heart of the Miño River section of Ribeira Sacra, in the superb sub-region of Chantada. This is prime real estate, with steep, terraced slate vineyards overlooking the river and it is home to some of the region's greatest *terroir*. Primitivo's white wine is composed of a blend of sixty percent Godello and forty percent Treixadura, and unlike many of his neighbors, Señor Lareu barrel-ferments this wine. His 2014 is now into its apogee and drinking splendidly, offering up a bright and complex nose of lime, quince, dried pear, a touch of green olive, superb minerality and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still very racy in personality, with a fine core, excellent focus and grip and a long, vibrant and perfectly balanced finish. This wine is drinking very well today, but still has plenty of life ahead of it. 2018-2028. **93**.

Ribeira Sacra Tinto

2017 Mencía- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The 2017 regular bottling of Mencía from Pedro Rodríguez is young and very promising. The bouquet offers up a sappy and still quite primary blend of cassis, pomegranate, espresso, slate soil tones, woodsmoke, gentle notes of tree bark and a touch of cola in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and light on its feet, with a lovely core, fine soil signature, just a bit of suave tannin and fine length and grip on the still quite primary finish. The wine is nicely plush on the attack, but is still not detailed like it will be with a few months more bottle age and I would tuck this away for at least six months and let it start to sharpen up its precision. There are superb raw materials here, and perhaps, just a touch of new oak? 2019-2050. **91+**.

2017 Mencía- Benito Santos (Ribeira Sacra)

The 2017 Mencía from Benito Santos is a lovely wine, with a very pure and varietally-defined bouquet of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, graphite, tree bark and slate soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and bouncy, with a good core of fruit, lovely transparency, quite modest tannins and fine length and grip on the well-balanced and nascently complex finish. This is a lovely, middleweight version of Ribeira Sacra that is approachable today, but will be even better with a couple of years in the cellar. A fine value. 2019-2040. **88+**.

2016 Misturado de Abeleda- A Chingao Vineyards y Envínate (Amandi)

The Misturado de Abeleda bottling from A Chingao Vineyards and Envínate is sourced from a more than century-old vineyard that is co-planted with seventy percent red grapes and thirty percent white grapes. What the specific grape varieties are is anybody's guess today, but the team at Envínate co-ferments everything with indigenous yeasts, after foot trodding, in open top tubs and aged in old, three and four hundred liter barrels for eleven months prior to bottling. The 2016 Misturado de Abeleda is fairly dark in color (for thirty percent white grapes!) and offers up a deep and nicely old-fashioned nose of cassis, dark berries, roasted game, graphite, tree bark, a bit of Ribeira Sacra's sweet botanicals and a fine base of stony soil tones. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and complex, with lovely intensity of flavor, fine soil

signature, moderate tannins and a long, tangy finish. The white grapes in the blend make their presence felt more here on the palate, where there is an excellent lightness of step, rather than on the nose. This is a lovely, old school wine in the best sense, and though it is not quite in the same quality level as the various Lousas bottlings from Envínate, it is a lovely bottle. 2018-2040+. **90+.**



2016 Mencía Lousas “Viñas de Aldea”- Envínate (Amandi-Ribeira Sacra)

The Viñas de Aldea cuvée is Envínate’s blended bottling of Ribeira Sacra, crafted from several different vineyard parcels- all of which are at least sixty years of age. The 2016 vintage of Viñas de Alea is quite a bit more red fruity in profile than the outstanding 2015 version, offering up a refined bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, tree bark, slate minerality, graphite, gamebird and just a hint of pepper in the upper register. I should mention that this gets progressively more black fruity as it opens up in the glass. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and beautifully transparent, with a lovely core, excellent complexity, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, well-balanced and tangy young finish. This needs three to five years in the cellar to properly blossom, but it is going to be an outstanding wine once it is truly ready to drink. 2022-2055. **92.**

2016 Mencía Lousas “Parcela Rosende”- Envínate (Amandi-Ribeira Sacra)

The 2016 Mencía Lousas “Parcela Rosende” from Envínate is their newest single vineyard bottling, as this wine used to find its way into the blended Viñas de Aldea cuvée. This

is a bit of a *terroir* outlier for the Lousas bottlings, as these old vines do not grow in slate, as does nearly ninety percent of the vineyards in the Amandi sub-region, but on pure granite. The wine is outstanding in 2016, offering up a pure and very transparent bouquet of red berries, pomegranate, black cherries, graphite, gentle smokiness, fresh herbs, tree bark and a superb base of stony, granitic minerality. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and intensely flavored, with excellent mineral drive, moderate tannins and a very long, vibrant, well-balanced and nascently complex finish. This is the most delicately styled of the single vineyard bottlings of Lousas, but it has all of the constituent components in place to age long and gracefully. Fine juice. 2023-2055+. **93.**

2016 Mencía Lousas “Parcela Camiño Novo”- Envínate (Amandi-Ribeira Sacra)

The 2016 Parcela Camiño Novo is a superb wine in the making, produced from a beautifully situated vineyard, perched high above the Sil River, with vines in excess of seventy years of age. The wine is primarily Mencía (ninety percent), with the balance made up of Garnacha Tintorera. The 2016 Parcela Camiño Novo offers up a superb bouquet, redolent of sweet dark berries, graphite, espresso, pomegranate, bonfires, pepper, Ribeira Sacra botanicals and a bit of cola in the upper register. On the palate the wine is young, full, focused and impeccably balanced, with fine mid-palate depth, outstanding soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, complex and soil-driven finish. This is an outstanding follow-up to the brilliant 2015 version. It is not quite as powerful in style, but it has no trouble keeping pace in terms of complexity and mineral drive. 2022-2060. **93+.**

2016 Mencía- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The 2016 regular bottling from Pedro Rodríguez is a fine, youthful bottle of Mencía, with plenty of black fruity depth, fine soil signature and a good chassis for aging. The bouquet is a youthful blend of cassis, pomegranate, graphite, hung game, tree bark, espresso and slate minerality. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, primary and a bit peppery on the backend, with a good core of fruit, firm, ripe tannins and very good length and grip on the soil-driven, nascently complex and promising finish. With some time in decanter, this wine is approachable today, but it is still really a wine that is built for at least a bit of aging and will be so much better to drink with three to five years’ worth of bottle age. There is a lot here waiting to unfurl, so just give it a bit of time. 2022-2050. **91+.**

2016 Azos de Pobo- Datterra Viticultores- Laura Lorenzo (Quiroga-Bibeí)

Laura Lorenzo is a very talented young winemaker who works a number of very old vineyards in the Ribeira Sacra sub-region of Quiroga-Bibeí. Her Azos de Pobo bottling is a field blend from an old vineyard that is somewhere from eight to one hundred and twenty years of age- no one still living in the region is quite certain. The blend is half Garnacha Tintorera and Gran Negro, with the balance made up of disparate parts of Mencía, Merenzao and Mouraton. *Señora* Lorenzo trods these grapes by foot, ferments them with indigenous yeasts and raises them in old Burgundy casks for eleven months prior to bottling. The 2016 comes in at a cool twelve percent octane and offers up an expressive nose of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, a touch of Alicante Bouschet’s autumnal leafiness, spit-roasted game, graphite, dark soil tones and a lovely mix of spice elements and botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish, complex and beautifully detailed out of the blocks, with a solid core, lovely soil inflection, moderate, well-measured tannins and a long, intensely flavored and complex finish. This wine will age beautifully and seems likely to put on more mid-palate weight with bottle age, but is lovingly balanced out of the blocks and already very easy to drink. It is a suave wine that

requires some concentration to notice all that is going on in the glass, but it is immensely complex and rewards that attention with great pleasure. 2020-2045+. **92.**

2016 Azos de Vila- Datterra Viticultores- Laura Lorenzo (Quiroga-Bibeí)

This bottling from Laura Lorenzo is made from a very old vineyard that is a field blend of Mencía, Garnacha Tintorera, Merenzao, Mouraton, Gran Negro and the like, though no one is really quite sure of the percentages of each planted here. She ferments the wine with indigenous yeasts and raised it in a combination of 225 and 500 liter old barrels. The 2016 comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a beautifully complex and black fruity nose of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, roasted game, tree bark, a nice touch of botanicals, slate minerality and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, refined and beautifully taught and low octane, with a good core, superb soil signature, suave, buried tannins and fine length and grip on the complex and still fairly youthful and nicely understated finish. This could do with at least a handful of years in the cellar to blossom and start to show some secondary layering, but it is so well-balanced that it is also quite easy to drink today. 2020-2045+. **91+.**

2016 Portela do Vento- Datterra Viticultores- Laura Lorenzo (Quiroga-Bibeí)

The Portela do Vento bottling from Laura Lorenzo is her blended cuvée, with the seven vineyard parcels that she draws upon for this bottling lying in both the Quiroga-Bibeí and Amandi sub-regions of Ribeira Sacra. The wine is primarily Mencía (ninety percent), with a bit of Garnacha Tintorera, Merenzao, Mouratón and Gran Negro included in the field blend. Laura only includes about twenty percent whole clusters in this bottling. The 2016 Portela do Vento tips the scales at a cool 12.5 percent alcohol and delivers a fine and very elegant aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, chicory, tree bark, complex mineral undertow, a touch of pomegranate, graphite and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with lovely soil signature, a lovely core of black fruit, just a touch of tannin and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is already very easy to drink, but has the balance to also age very nicely. Fine juice. 2018-2045+. **93.**

2016 Camino de la Frontera- Datterra Viticultores- Laura Lorenzo (Quiroga-Bibeí)

The 2016 Camino de la Frontera from Datterra Viticultores is one of Laura Lorenzo's first single vineyard bottlings and it is outstanding. The blend is primarily Mencía and the wine is beautifully complex in 2016, delivering a refined bouquet of sweet dark berries, cassis, graphite, lavender, chicory, a touch of grilled meats, a bit of smokiness, a beautifully complex base of soil, wild fennel and an exotic topnote of dried eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very complex, with a lovely core, great transparency, fine-grained, moderate tannins and a very long, very refined, vibrant and classy finish. This comes in at 12.5 percent octane and is intensely flavored, while beautifully light on its feet. Superb juice. 2018-2050. **93+.**

2016 Mencía "Camiño Real"- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The Camiño Real vineyard from Guímaro is planted mostly to Mencía, with the vines ranging from forty to sixty years of age, but there are small percentages of other classical Ribeira Sacra red varieties planted here as well. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts (all whole clusters, goes through a forty day maceration and is raised half in old *foudres* and half in old *barriques* and *demi-muids*. The 2016 Camiño Real comes in at thirteen percent octane and offers up a deep and complex nose of black cherries, pomegranate, graphite, a nice mix of botanicals and spice tones, slate and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a superb core of fruit, excellent soil signature, tangy acids and outstanding focus and grip on the very long, pure, moderately tannic and nascently complex finish. This is an outstanding wine in the making, and though it is very approachable already, it is still a puppy and I would try to let

it alone in a cool, dark corner of the cellar for at least another three to five years and really let it start to hit on all cylinders! 2021-2055+. **93+**.

2015 Mencía- Divina Clementia (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The 2015 vintage from Divina Clementia is an outstanding bottle of Mencía in the making. The bouquet is deep, ripe and refined, wafting from the glass in a superb blend of black raspberry, pomegranate, slate, cola, a touch of violet and espresso. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and quite suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, beautiful transparency, ripe, moderate tannins and a very long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. The ripeness of the vintage has given this wine an almost glossy youthful personality, but there is depth and complexity lurking in wait and only needing a bit of bottle age to come to the fore. It is certainly quite drinkable in its youth, but there is so much more here waiting to blossom that I would not touch a bottle for three or four more years! 2021-2055. **93**.

2015 A Ponte- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The A Ponte bottling from Pedro Rodríguez's adegas Guímaro is a blend of Mencía, Brancellao, Sousón, Caiño Tinto and Merenzao. The 2015 edition is a beautifully expressive wine on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of dark berries, pomegranate, spit-roasted game, a bit of bonfire, lovely spice tones, a fine base of stony soil and a touch of cedar and a lovely topnote of Ribeira Sacra botanicals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with a good core, excellent soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, youthfully complex and vibrant finish. This is already quite approachable today, but is really built to age and deserves at least a couple of years in the cellar to let the tannins soften up just a bit more. But, that said, it is not going to be easy to resist in its youth, as the wine is excellent! 2020-2050. **93**.

2015 Mencía "Finca Capeliños"- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The Finca Capeliños bottling from Pedro Rodríguez is produced very old school, with foot trodding of the bunches, a significant percentage of whole clusters and aging in old Burgundy barrels. This vineyard is planted with ninety-five-plus year-old Mencía vines and, though I somehow missed tasting the 2014 vintage here, the 2015 is another stunning wine and a stellar follow-up to the legendary 2013 Finca Capeliños. The wine is ripe in 2015, coming in at 13.5 percent and delivers a beautifully complex bouquet of sweet dark berries, a bit of roasted gamebird, graphite, tree bark, woodsmoke, slate, chicory and gentle botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and impeccably balanced, with bottomless depth at the core, great soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and focused young finish. This is a great wine in the making, but it needs some cellaring to allow its tannins to melt a bit and the wine to truly blossom. Stunning potential. 2022-2060. **94**.

2015 Mencía "Finca Pombeiras"- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

As I mentioned last year with my note on the 2014, the Finca Pombeiras is the newest single vineyard bottling from Pedro Rodríguez, having first been crafted in the 2011 vintage. The wine is produced from a small plot of seventy year-old Mencía vines planted on the serious slopes that overlook the Sil River, at four hundred and fifty meters and a due south exposition. The 2015 Finca Pombeiras comes in at 13.5 percent octane and offers up a beautiful bouquet of cassis, grilled meats, espresso, graphite, a complex base of slate minerality, a touch of botanicals and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and beautifully soil-driven, with a rock solid core, stellar complexity, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and very, very promising finish. This is still a young wine (though all too easy to drink already) and should be

allowed to fully blossom with time in the cellar, but it is very easy to imagine a significant percentage of these bottles being consumed in the next five years, as the wine is already flat out delicious! 2023-2060+. **95.**

2015 Mencía “Finca Meixemán”- Guímaro (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The vines in the Finca Meixemán are now more than seventy years of age, planted on schist and Señor Rodríguez foot treads the grapes for this bottling. It is raised in old Burgundy barrels and the 2015 is outstanding, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of dark berries, pomegranate, tree bark, complex, stony soil tones, a bit of spit-roasted game, woodsmoke, bitter chocolate, just a whisper of Mencía botanicals and a nice touch of graphite in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, black fruity, focused and beautifully sappy at the core, with outstanding soil signature, ripe, suave tannins, outstanding complexity and a very, very long, vibrant and youthfully brilliant finish. Like the last couple of vintages of the Finca Meixemán I have tasted, this wine really deserves some time in the cellar to blossom fully, but is so good out of the blocks that it is going to be very, very difficult to keep one's hands off of the wine and let it age a bit longer! This is a great, great wine. 2018-2060. **95+.**

2015 Penapedre Vino Tinto- Alberto Nanclares (Miño River)

The 2015 Penapedre from Alberto Nanclares is made from a field blend from a hundred year-old vineyard that Alberto and his wife, Silvia Prieto, have only begun farming in the last couple of years. The *cépages* is approximately sixty percent Mencía, thirty percent Garnacha Tintorera (Alicante Bouschet) and ten percent mystery, but mostly red grapes, though there is probably a bit of Godello in this mix as well. The vineyard is very steep, planted on pure granite and has been farmed organically for quite some time now. The 2015 Penapedre comes in at an even thirteen percent (fairly low octane in this hot growing season) and offers up a beautiful bouquet of cassis, pomegranate, graphite, cigar smoke, espresso, tree bark and granitic minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully chewy, with a fine core of fruit, excellent transparency, firm, ripe tannins and fine focus and grip on the long, tightly-knit and very promising finish. This is a superb bottle that needs some bottle age to properly blossom, but which is very light on its feet and loaded with potential. 2023-2055. **92.**

2014 Mencía- Divina Clementia (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

The 2014 Mencía from Divina Clementia is now the third vintage from winemaker Raul Suarez and his talented team and the wine gets better with each passing vintage. The 2014 is young and nicely reductive at first pour and needs a bit of swirling to encourage it to blossom in the glass, but blossom it most emphatically does! The wine comes in at a cool thirteen percent and eventually offers up a beautifully classic bouquet of cassis, pomegranate, slate, espresso, graphite, a bit of tree bark and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very complex, with a great core of black, gently sappy fruit, superb soil signature, ripe tannins, tangy acids and outstanding balance on the long, slightly meaty finish. This is an utterly brilliant example of Ribeira Sacra Mencía! 2022-2060. **94+.**

2013 Mencía- Divina Clementia (Amandi- Ribeira Sacra)

It has been more than a year and a half since I last tasted the 2013 Mencía from Divina Clementia and the wine is blossoming beautifully. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up a superb blend of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, spit-roasted gamebird, chicory, a complex base of slate minerality, woodsmoke, tree bark and graphite. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with moderate tannins, tangy acids and

excellent soil signature on the long, well-balanced and complex finish. This is still in climbing mode and deserves more bottle age, but it is starting to drink quite well and is getting harder and harder to resist! 2018-2045+. **93+**.

Valdeorras Blanco

2016 Godello “Ededia”- Bodegas Viña Somoza

The 2016 Godello “Ededia” from Viña Somoza is a beautiful example of this superb varietal. The bouquet is deep, pure and classic in its aromatic constellation of pear, melon, beeswax, salty soil tones and plenty of spring flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent transparency, a zesty girdle of acidity, stunning backend grip and a very long, nascently complex finish. This is still a youngster, as the wine was clearly built to age for the long haul, and could even do with another year or two in the cellar to start to show some secondary layering. It will easily last twenty years. 2019-2040+. **93**.

2014 Godello- Hacienda Ucediños

The 2014 Godello from the Santalla brothers’ Hacienda Ucediños winery is a superb wine, which at four years of age has blossomed beautifully and is right in its prime. The superb nose jumps from the glass in a blend of pear, honey, salty soil tones, orange zest and a nice touch of green olive in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and focused, with a great core of fruit, fine soil signature and a long, zesty and complex finish of impeccable balance and grip. Fine, fine Godello that is ready to drink, but still has plenty of life ahead of it. 2018-2025+. **92+**.

Valdeorras Tinto

2016 Casas de Enriba- Daterra Viticultores- Laura Lorenzo (Valdeorras)

The Casas de Enriba cuvée from Laura Lorenzo is composed entirely of Mencía, from twenty year-old vines planted on a granite, clay and quartzite-based vineyard that sits at five hundred and fifty meters above sea level. The 2016 version is fairly robust for one of her wines (this is Valdeorras, rather than Ribeira Sacra after all!), coming in at 13.5 percent and offering up a ripe and quite complex bouquet of baked black currants, graphite, spit-roasted game, wild fennel, a bit of bonfire, dark soil tones and French roast. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven, with a rock solid core, fine focus and grip, a bit of chewy tannin on the backend and excellent length and grip on the balanced and nobly rustic finish. This is quite broad-shouldered for one of Laura Lorenzo’s wines, but it is complex, soil-driven and excellent in quality. 2020-2045+. **92**.

2016 O Trincado- La Perdida (Nacho González)

Nacho González is a biologist by training and only came to winegrowing in 2011 when his grandmother left him an old, rundown vineyard in the backwoods of Valdeorras, planted primarily to old vines of Garnacha Tintorera. As his grandmother impressed upon him how good these old vines had been in their heyday, he set out to nurture them back to life, while farming them organically. There is a bit of Mencía in this blend as well, which is raised in a combination of very old barrels and clay amphora. The 2016 O Trincado comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a fine nose of dark berries, pomegranate, chicory, coffee grounds, a bit of cigar ash, dark soil tones and a hint of tree bark in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely suave on the attack, with good intensity of flavor, quite modest tannins and

excellent length and grip on the complex finish. This is light on its feet and drinking very well already, but has the balance to age nicely at least for the coming decade. As Señor González eschews added SO₂ at bottling, I do not know how much longer it will last beyond that point, but clearly there is a decade of very good drinking ahead for this wine. 2018-2028+? **91**.



2016 Albarello “O Tesouro”- Bodegas Viña Somoza

Bodegas Viña Somoza is the brainchild of Victor Fernandez, who founded the estate in 2001. He has hired 4 Monos winemaker Javier Garcia to fine-tune the house style, starting with the 2015 vintage here. Javier ferments the Albarello single vineyard bottling from “O Tesouro” with indigenous yeasts and raises the wine in older French *barricas* for twelve months prior to bottling. The 2016 is a lovely follow-up to the excellent 2015 version, coming in again at a very civilized 12.5 percent and offering a light ruby color and loads of aromatic personality in its bouquet of cherries, blood orange, pepper, botanicals, slate minerality and a topnote of vinesmoke. On the palate the wine is medium-full, transparent and tangy, with lovely intensity of flavor, lovely mineral drive, impeccable balance and a long, complex, modestly-tannic and refined finish. I really like the Albarello grape (also called Brancellao), which is light on its feet and yet loaded with personality. This fine example will drink well on release, but will be even better with a few years’ worth of bottle age and should also age long and gracefully. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **92+**.

2016 Via XVIII Tinto- Bodegas Viña Somoza

The 2016 Via XVIII Tinto from Bodegas Viña Somoza is made from a blend of Mencía, Garnacha Tintorera and Mouratón. The wine comes in at a civilized thirteen percent octane and offers up a fine aromatic constellation of cassis, stony soil tones, pepper, chicory, lovely botanicals, coffee grounds, cola and Alicante Bouschet's leafy topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with lovely transparency, modest tannins, good acids and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and intensely-flavored finish. This is very light on its feet for Valdeorras Tinto and will age long and gracefully. There are plenty of herbal tones in its aromatic and flavor constellation, which may not be to all palates, but it is a beautiful and complex wine in which the intrepid are bound to be delighted! 2018-2040+. **90.**

2015 O Poulo- La Perdida (Nacho González)

The O Poulo bottling from Nacho González's La Perdida winery is made of a field blend of Garnacha Tintorera and the white grape of Palomino. The vineyard actually sits on the junction of the Ribera Sacra and Valdeorras D.O.s, at about six hundred meters above sea level and this is his coolest vineyard, which accounts for it coming in at 12.5 percent octane in the hot summer of 2015. The wine is raised entirely in old oak casks for one year without bottling, without added SO₂ at the *mise*. The 2015 is deep and expressive on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, espresso, tree bark, a touch of fresh herbs, a fine base of soil, a touch of graphite and a bit of violet in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and moderately tannic, with a fine core, excellent transparency, nascent complexity and a long, gently chewy and very nicely balanced finish. This could use three or four years in the cellar to blossom, but shows excellent potential and will be a fine bottle once it has softened up a bit. 2022-2035+. **91.**

2015 Escalada do Sil Tinto- Alberto Orte

The Escalada do Sil Tinto from Alberto Orte is composed of a blend of sixty percent Merenzao (Trousseau in the Jura), thirty percent Mencía and ten percent Garnacha Tintorera. The vineyards overlook the Sil River and the wine uses one hundred percent whole clusters and is raised in five hundred liter French casks. The 2015 version is a superb young wine, offering up a very complex bouquet of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, bonfire, roasted gamebird, a touch of cinnamon, beautiful granitic soil tones, a fine array of spices and just a hint of Alicante Bouschet's autumnal leafiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a lovely core, tangy acids, excellent focus and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex and soil-driven finish. This is a dynamite wine in the making, but it needs a few more years in the cellar to allow its tannins to soften up just a bit more and the wine to start to really blossom. 2022-2055. **93.**

Bierzo Blanco

2016 La Senda "In A Gadda Da Vida"- Diego Losada (Bierzo)

Diego Losada's "In A Gadda Da Vida" bottling is composed of a blend of fifty percent Godello, thirty percent Doña Blanca and ten percent each of Palomino and Malvasia. The vines here all range from sixty to ninety years of age and the wine is fermented in open top barrels and allowed ten days of skin contact. It is aged in old oak casks for eight months prior to bottling without added SO₂. The 2016 "In A Gadda De Vida" offers up a deep and complex bouquet of peach, apple, salty minerality, a hint of wild fennel and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and beautifully mineral in personality, with a lovely core of

fruit, sound framing acids and very good length and grip on the complex finish. There is just a whisper of natural wine wildness on the backend, but it is quite subtle today. I would opt for drinking this wine over the relative near-term, as I have not had good luck holding onto low sulfur bottlings such as this over the relative long haul. But, for drinking over the next few years, there is a lot of pleasure to be had here! 2018-2022. **90.**

Bierzo Tinto

2017 Mencía- Luna Beberide

The 2017 Mencía from Luna Beberide is another lovely wine from this excellent producer. Readers may recall that this bottling hails from a forty year-old vineyard planted at 650 meters above sea level. The wine delivers fine aromatic purity in its constellation of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, espresso, slate soil tones, woodsmoke and a whisper of wild fennel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and transparent, with a fine core of fruit, tangy acids, moderate, well-integrated tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. I have written how much Mencía resembles pinot noir in terms of transparency and intensity of flavor without undue weight, and here is a perfect example of that. This is a superb wine and an absolutely stunning value! 2018-2040+. **92.**

2016 Mencía “Finca la Cuesta”- Luna Beberide

The “Finca la Cuesta” from Luna Beberide is made from older vines than his regular bottling of Mencía, as these vines range from sixty to seventy years of age. This soils in this vineyard are a combination of clay and slate and the wine is raised entirely two and three year-old French casks. The 2016 vintage of Finca la Cuesta is an excellent wine, delivering a fine nose of blackberries, pomegranate, graphite, coffee bean, woodsmoke, a touch of licorice and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and intensely flavored, with a lovely core, excellent transparency, ripe, firm tannins and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This is a bit more structured out of the blocks than the regular bottle of Mencía and should be cellared for a few years, but once it blossoms, it is going to be excellent. 2024-2060. **92+.**

2016 El Aqueronte- Bodegas La Senda (Diego Losada)

The El Aqueronte bottling from Diego Losada is a single vineyard wine that is planted with sixty to ninety year-old Mencía vines. The soils are clay, chalk, quartz and slate and the elevation of the vineyard is five hundred and fifty-five meters. Señor Losada ferments the wine in an old chestnut vat with partial whole clusters, and then racks the wine off to age in another chestnut vat for ten months prior to bottling unfined and unfiltered, with no added SO₂. The 2016 El Aqueronte comes in at a civilized thirteen percent octane and offers up a beautifully expressive bouquet of cassis, pomegranate, complex minerality, a bit of graphite, spit-roasted game and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and light on its feet, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, moderate tannins and a very long, tangy and gently wild and volatile finish. Without any added SO₂ at bottling, I am not sure how long this wine will last in bottle, but it is drinking beautifully right now and there is no real reason to wait to find out! 2018-2030? **93.**

Rueda

2017 Verdejo- Egeo (Isaac Fernandez Selection)

The 2017 Verdejo from Egeo hails from sixty year-old bush vines and is a lovely example of this varietal and a truly exceptional value, as it retails here in the US for only \$15 per bottle. The bouquet of the 2017 delivers a fine aromatic constellation of lime, tart orange, a touch of green olive, salty minerality, just a whisper of cut grass and a pungent floral topnote redolent of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and loaded with personality, with a touch more sauvignon blanc-like grassiness than the nose suggests, with a lovely core of fruit, good transparency and lovely length and grip on the tangy finish. This is really good wine for its price point. 2019-2025. **90.**

Castilla y León

2016 Arenisca Tinto- Manuel Cantalapiedra

Manuel Cantalapiedra works alongside of his father Isaac, who have been growing terrific Verdejo in the heart of Rueda for many years and just began bottling wines on their own starting in the 2014 vintage. While the family is best-known for their excellent Verdejo, their red wine, Arenisca, which is produced from tempranillo purchased in Toro, is absolutely stellar in 2016, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of cassis, sweet dark berries, stony minerality, bitter chocolate, a nice touch of botanicals and a topnote of chicory. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent backend mineral drive, moderate tannins and excellent length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This wine is nicely ripe and very approachable today, but will be even better with a few years in the cellar to let the tannins soften up a bit more. Fine juice. 2018-2035. **92.**

2016 Cantayano Blanco- Manuel Cantalapiedra

The Cantayano Blanco from Manuel Cantalapiedra is the winery's flagship bottling of Verdejo, with ninety percent of the cuvée fermented and raised in stainless steel and ten percent in older barrels. The 2016 Cantayano offers up a classic nose of lime, tart pear, green olive, salty soil tones, white flowers and a topnote of wild fennel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and beautifully deep at the core, with bright acids, excellent mineral drive and a long, complex and very classy finish. This still has a youthful touch on the backend and will continue to improve over the next several years in bottle. First class Verdejo! 2018-2030. **92.**

2016 Lirondo Blanco- Manuel Cantalapiedra

The 2016 Lirondo Blanco from Manuel Cantalapiedra is made entirely from Verdejo in the family's vineyards in Rueda, but the wine's label does not state Verdejo anywhere on it and the back label places the wine as hailing from Castilla y León, so I am guessing that its completely natural *elevage* and no added SO₂ at bottling did not allow it to get the DO (or prompted Manuel to not even apply). The wine shows a bit of natural wine "mousiness" on the nose, augmenting scents of lime, lemon, salty minerality, dried flowers, some leesy tones and orange peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and shows very good mid-palate depth, with good acids and backend bounce and a long, complex finish. One has to enjoy the slight mousiness of a natural wine, as it is here on both the nose and palate, but there is outstanding depth of fruit and mineral drive here as well. With no added SO₂ at bottling, I would opt for drinking this over the next year or so, but there is plenty here to like if you are already predisposed to this category of wine. For those not already sold on natural wines, it may be just a bit too wild in personality. 2018-2020+? **89.**

Toro

2016 Toro “Prima”- Bodegas San Roman

The 2016 Toro “Prima” from Bodegas San Roman is a blend of eighty-five percent tempranillo and fifteen percent garnacha. The wine is raised for one year in used, French and American oak casks and comes in at 14.5 percent octane in this vintage. The bouquet is deep and very promising, offering up scents of cassis, black raspberries, a bit of saddle leather, spit-roasted meats, a touch of anise and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven in personality, with a fine core of fruit, suave, moderate tannins and outstanding length and grip on the complex and very well balanced finish. This is first class Toro and a bargain, as here in the states, it sells for \$25! This does not show its octane at all and is very precise on the backend, with impeccable balance and no signs of heat. 2019-2040. **92.**

2015 Toro Crianza- Viñas Elias Mora

The 2015 Crianza from Elias Mora is a touch riper than the 2015 entry level bottling I reviewed quite positively a couple of issues back, as this is a full fifteen percent octane (versus 14.5 for the previous example). The wine sees no new oak during its *elevage*, as it is raised for a year in a fifty-fifty mix of American and French casks that are already one year-old. The wine offers up a ripe and classy bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, some balsamic overtones, cigar wrapper, a fine base of soil tones and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, powerful and full, with excellent depth at the core, broad shoulders and a long, moderately tannic and complex finish. This carries its alcohol pretty well, but at fifteen percent, there is a bit of backend heat poking out. This is a very well-made wine that is a bit too ripe for my palate, which keeps its score down a bit, but this is Toro in the twenty-first century and until something gets done about global warming, this is how these wines are going to be. In that context, this is truly a superb effort and if you can handle the octane better than I on the finish, add four points to me score, as there is a lot to like here! 2018-2035+. **88.**

Ribera del Duero

2017 Senda del Oro- Bodegas Vizcarra (Ribera del Duero)

The 2015 Senda del Oro from Bodegas Vizcarra is composed entirely of tempranillo, with many of the vines in this bottling quite old (planted in the 1950s). The vineyards are quite high in elevation, situated at 849 meters above sea level, which nicely keeps the octane down. The 2015 vintage of Senda del Oro comes in at fourteen percent alcohol and offers up a youthful bouquet of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a good base of soil tones, cigar wrapper and just a bit of nutty oak from its six months spent in cask. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very nicely balanced, with good, solid depth at the core, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. This is approachable now, but still a very youthful wine and it will be even better with a year or two of bottle age. This is not a powerhouse, nor overtly oaky and harkens back stylistically nicely to the early days of Ribera del Duero. 2021-2045. **89.**

2015 Evolet- Aurelio Cabestrero (Ribera del Duero)

The 2015 Evolet bottling from Aurelio Cabestrero is produced from twenty-five year-old tempranillo vines, planted in a chalky vineyard at a fairly high altitude for the region, reaching up to nine hundred meters above sea level. The 2015 vintage offers up a sappy young bouquet of black cherries, black plums, cigar smoke, dark chocolate violets and a touch of spicy oak (despite

the wine being raised entirely in used casks). On the palate the wine is ripe and full-bodied, but nicely light on its feet for Ribera del Duero, due to the cooler nights at elevation. The finish is long, focused and nicely balanced, with fairly modest tannins and fine length and grip. This is a very good example that offers up fine value. 2018-2030+. **90.**

2015 El Pedrosal- Bodegas Hermanos Pérez Pascuas (Ribera del Duero)

The 2015 El Pedrosal from Bodegas Hermanos Pérez Pascuas is a fairly ripe wine, coming in at 14.5 percent octane, but is beautifully balanced and carries its ripeness with a sense of elegance and breed. The bouquet is beautiful, wafting from the glass in a sappy blend of plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, a nice touch of soil and a very classy base of sweet vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and velvety on the attack, with a fine core of fruit, moderate tannins and very good grip on the long, gently chewy and ripe finish. I would have liked this even better a half point lower in alcohol, for at this octane, the oak tannins stick out a bit on the finish right now and the wine will need a year or two in the cellar to absorb its oak properly. But, this is good juice and will be very tasty once the new wood is fully soaked up. 2021-2045. **90+.**



2014 Finca Valdeolmos- Goyo García (Ribera del Duero)

The 2014 vintage of Finca Valdeolmos from Goyo García is the new release of this single vineyard bottling. Readers may recall that these vines are well over eighty years of age, with the soils here a red sand topsoil over a hard base of limestone. The 2014 version of Finca

Valdeolmos is a beautiful young wine, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering up stunning purity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is still fairly primary, offering up a lovely blend of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a bit of lead pencil, a touch of clove, lovely, chalky soil tones and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex and very, very promising finish. As always, this is a supremely elegant example of Ribera del Duero that will age very long and gracefully, but really deserves some time in the cellar to stretch its wings and start to blossom. 2023-2065. **93+**.

2014 Finca el Peruco- Goyo García (Ribera del Duero)

Readers may recall that Goyo García's Finca el Peruco bottling hails from an eighty-five year-old vineyard that includes fifteen percent of the white grape of Albillo co-planted with the Tempranillo. The 2014 vintage of this fine single vineyard bottling tips the scales at 13.5 percent alcohol and delivers a fine young aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, gentle spice tones of nutmeg and cinnamon, chalky soil tones, a bit of cocoa powder and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely tangy (from the inclusion of the Albillo?), with excellent transparency, a fine core of fruit, suave, ripe tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and vibrant finish. This is tightly-knit out of the blocks and will need five to seven years to blossom, but this is going to be brilliant Ribera del Duero once it has blossomed! 2024-2065. **95**.

2014 Finca Viñas de Arcilla- Goyo García (Ribera del Duero)

The 2014 Finca Viñas de Arcilla from Goyo García is a tad riper than his other two single vineyard wines in 2014, coming in at an even fourteen percent, but offering the same classic balance and sense of classical restraint that defines all of Señor García's wines. The bouquet wafts from the glass in more black fruity blend of cassis, black cherries, cigar smoke, lovely soil tones (there is more clay here than in el Peruco or Valdeolmos), chocolate and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and beautifully balanced, with a rock solid core, still very good acidity, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a very long, still fairly primary finish. There is terrific backend energy here, but the wine is properly structured and will need some cellaring before it is ready for primetime drinking. 2025-2065. **93+**.

2014 JC Vizcarra- Bodegas Vizcarra (Ribera del Duero)

The 2014 JC Vizcarra bottling from Bodegas Vizcarra is composed entirely of tempranillo, from a vineyard planted in 1980 at an elevation of 849 meters above sea level, which allows for good diurnal temperature swings during the summer heat. The wine is raised in a fifty-fifty blend of new oak and two year-old casks. The 2014 JC Vizcarra offers up a pure and nicely refined bouquet of black cherries, pomegranate, raw cocoa, a nice touch of nuttiness, good soil tones and a suave foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows promise of fine complexity to come with bottle age, with a good core, fine-grained tannins, really quite good acids and a long, vibrant and quite classy finish. This is listed at 14.5 percent octane, but seems even a touch cooler than that, as the wine has a nice bounce to it from the higher elevation vineyards. This is an excellent value. 2020-2050. **90**.

2014 Inés Vizcarra- Bodegas Vizcarra (Ribera del Duero)

The 2014 Inés Vizcarra is one of Bodegas Vizcarra top two cuvées. The wine is a blend of ninety percent tempranillo and ten percent merlot, with the wine raised in four hundred liter casks to downplay a bit the new oak in the wine. The casks are a combination of ninety percent French oak and ten percent American oak and the wine is bottled after eighteen months in cask. The 2014 version comes in at 14.5 percent octane and offers up a ripe and complex nose of black

cherries, black plums, chocolate, cigar wrapper, a nice touch of soil tones and well done, smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, suave tannins and impressive length and grip on the balanced and nascently complex finish. This wine carries its alcohol beautifully and there is only a whisper of backend heat here, but I really like the balance and would bet this wine will age long and very gracefully. Fine juice. 2024-2060. **92+**.

2014 Celia Vizcarra- Bodegas Vizcarra (Ribera del Duero)

The Celia Vizcarra cuvée from Juan Carlos Vizcarra is named for one of his two daughters (as is the Inés Vizcarra bottling above) and is a vineyard selection of his very best grapes in any given vintage. It is composed of ninety-five percent tempranillo and five percent garnacha and like the above wine, it is raised in four hundred liter casks to diminish the new oak's influence in the wine a bit. This too is aged in ninety percent French wood and ten percent American wood and the 2014 Celia comes in again at 14.5 percent octane. The wine delivers a fine, youthful aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, black plums, lovely soil tones, cigar smoke, coffee bean, a lovely touch of spice and a very refined base of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and tightly-knit, with great depth at the core, fine-grained tannins, good acids and excellent length and grip on the youthfully complex finish. This is a beautiful wine for the cellar and will be stellar when it is ready to drink. 2024-2060. **93+**.

2011 Pérez Pascuas “Gran Selección” Gran Reserva- Bodegas Hermanos Pérez Pascuas

The Pérez Pascuas “Gran Reserva” is made from the very oldest tempranillo vines that the family owns, which happen to be seventy years of age, and the wine spends twenty-six months in oak casks prior to bottling. The 2011 version is ripe at 14.5 percent alcohol, but also beautifully balanced, offering up a deep and very refined bouquet of plums, black cherries, hazelnuts, chocolate, cigar wrapper, a hint of violets and a lovely base of luxuriant, nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and very refined in profile, with a superb core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Perhaps there is just a whisper of heat on the backend here, but this wine carries its octane very well indeed. 2019-2045. **93**.

1968 Vega Sicilia “Unico” (served from magnum)

I have been fortunate over the years to drink the 1968 Vega Sicilia Unico on several occasions and this remains the single greatest vintage of this iconic wine I have ever drunk. However, though I have drunk this wine many times, I have never been particularly lucky with the 1968 out of magnum, as I have had a few corked examples in this sized format. Happily, this magnum was in perfect condition and provided the best showing I have had to date, as the wine has really reached its plateau of peak performance in the ten years that have ensued since I last drink it. The bouquet is deep and vibrant, offering up a refined constellation of plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, a touch of walnut, lovely balsamic tones, gentle tariness and a nice touch of American oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and bottomless at the core, with gorgeous focus and grip, just a bit of remaining backend tannin and stunning length on the complex, perfectly balanced and stellar finish. A great, great wine. 2018-2060. **98**.

Txakoli

2017 Txakolina “Harria”- Arzabro

The 2017 Txakolina “Harria” from Arzabro is still a very young wine, with some ways to go until it fully blossoms on the nose or palate. But, there are good things waiting in the wings here, as the bouquet offers up a primary blend of lime, menthol, dried flowers, white soil tones and a touch of raw almond in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full and nascently complex, with lovely acids and grip, a good core and very good length on the well-balanced finish. This is fairly reductive when first opened, though it is bottled under an agglomerated cork, and has that bit of band-aid on the nose and palate until it has a chance to blossom with some breathing. Once it opens up, it is quite a good example. 2018-2025. **90.**

2016 Getariako-Txakolina- Bengoetxe

The 2016 vintage of Getariako-Txakolina from Bengoetxe is a fine example in the making, offering up a bright and aromatically complex blend of grapefruit, tart pear, menthol, wild fennel, a touch of rosemary, stony minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and complex, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature, sound framing acids and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is not as tight out of the blocks as the 2015 was a year ago and I suspect this will not be quite as long-lived. Good juice. 2018-2023. **89.**

2015 Getariako-Txakolina- Bengoetxe

I tasted the 2015 Getariako-Txakolina from Bengoetxe about eighteen months ago and was delighted to see another bottle in my range of samples, as I had felt the wine would age well and could do with a bit of bottle age at the time. A year and a half down the road the wine has blossomed quite well, but is still nicely structured and shows plenty of reserve for further on down the road. The bouquet is a fine mix of pears, a bit of bread fruit, lime peel, menthol, wet stones and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and has opened up quite a bit more than the nose suggests, with a good core of fruit, fine mineral drive, still bright acids and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. This is probably quite a ripe vintage by the standards of this estate, but the wine has opened up nicely and is drinking with plenty of personality today. 2018-2025+. **89.**

Navarra

2017 Garnacha- Viña Zorzal

The 2017 Garnacha from Viña Zorzal is nicely low octane for this varietal and the growing season of 2017, as it comes in at an even thirteen percent alcohol. The nose is bright and inviting, offering up scents of red and black raspberries, spiced meats, roasted game, dark soil tones, pepper and a bit of *garrigue* in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and reasonably plump at the core, with a bit of backend tannin and good length and grip on the finish. This is not overly complex and seems a bit pinched at the moment, but it may open up nicely with a bit more bottle age. It is not bad, but perhaps the grapes were collected just a little too early to develop real personality? 2018-2028. **87+?**

2016 Graciano- Viña Zorzal

The 2016 Graciano from Viña Zorzal hails from a vineyard planted in 1978. The wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane in the 2016 vintage and offers up a fine bouquet of black cherries, roasted meats, a bit of chicory, a good base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the

palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven, with a bit of tannin, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. This is nicely light on its feet for Navarra (that is the beauty of Graciano) and a very good value. 2018-2030+. **89.**

Rioja Tinto

2016 Rioja-Pingao (Rioja Alta)

The Pingao 2016 Rioja is made up solely from tempranillo and is aged only four months in older barrels, with seventy-five percent of the casks made of American oak and twenty-five percent older French *barriques*. The wine offers up a very pretty nose of cherries, black raspberries, incipient Rioja spice tones (mostly clove and nutmeg), a lovely base of salty soil tones, a bit of coconutty oak and a nice flourish of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, focused and flat out delicious, with a respectable core, lovely soil signature, just a bit of backend tannin and a long, vibrant, complex and already slightly velvety finish. This is really good, “basic” Rioja that is tasty out of the blocks and will be even better three or four years down the road. Very old school and a terrific value! 2019-2035+. **89.**

2016 Rioja- Bodega Sierra de Toloño (Rioja Alavesa)

Bodega Sierra de Toloño is the brainchild of Sandra Bravo, who has worked in Bordeaux, California, New Zealand and Priorat prior to returning to her native Rioja in 2012. She has settled high up in the foothills of Rioja Alavesa and farms all of her vineyard parcels biodynamically. Her regular Rioja Tinto is composed entirely of tempranillo and is raised for one year in older French barrels prior to bottling; it hails from her higher altitude vineyards in Rioja Alavesa. The 2016 comes in at 13.5 percent octane and offers up a deep, spicy and very youthful nose of cherries, raspberries, Rioja spices, soil and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a good core and soil signature and a long, tangy and chewy finish. This needs several years in the cellar to start to blossom, but has all of the constituent components in place and seems likely to be quite a good bottle when it is ready to drink. 2026-2050. **89.**

2016 Rioja “Camino de Santa Cruz”- Bodega Sierra de Toloño (Rioja Alavesa)

Sandra Bravo’s Camino de Santa Cruz bottling of Rioja hails from a high altitude, old vine parcel of tempranillo planted on limestone soils, which she ferments in amphora and then ages for one year in French *barricas* prior to bottling. The 2016 version comes in at fourteen percent octane and offers up a pure and spicy nose of black cherries, sweet dark berries, Rioja spice, a bit of cigar wrapper, a fine base of soil and a bit of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full, young and ripe, with a good core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, nascently complex and well-balanced finish. This is still a quite primary wine and needs some time in the cellar to blossom and start to show its secondary layers of complexity. It should prove to be a good wine with bottle age, but does not show a lot of Rioja character in its youthful guise and is a bit “internationally anonymous” at the present time. Hopefully it will grow out of this with bottle age. 2025-2045+. **89+.**

2016 Rioja “Raposo” Villabuena d’Álava”- Bodega Sierra de Toloño (Rioja Alavesa)

The Raposo bottling of Rioja from Sandra Bravo is produced from vineyards in her home village of Villabuena d’Álava. The wine is raised in larger *foudres*, rather than smaller casks and the 2016 vintage comes in at 13.5 percent octane and is again, made entirely from tempranillo. The wine delivers a still very primary bouquet of red and black raspberries, cigar smoke, a lovely base of soil and just a hint of the Rioja spice elements that will evolve with bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and the most soil-driven of these three Rioja cuvées, with a good

core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, balanced and very youthful finish. This is at least a decade away from blossoming, but should be very good when it is ready to drink. 2026-2050. **90.**

2014 Rioja- Sierra de la Demanda (Alberto Orte)

The Rioja from Alberto Orte's Sierra de la Demanda winery is made from vines planted in the 1930s, which are planted at seven hundred meters elevation, making them some of the very highest elevation vineyards in all of Rioja. The wine is composed of a "contrarian" blend seventy-five percent Garnacha, twenty percent Tempranillo and five percent Viura and aged in French oak casks. The 2104 version comes in at a cool-ish thirteen percent octane and delivers a bright and red fruity bouquet of cherries, raspberries, a bit of meatiness, lovely spice tones, a complex base of soil, a touch of celery seed and a well-measured framing of cedary French oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy, elegant and complex finish. This is excellent young Rioja! I would applaud raising this wine in older American oak casks, just to pay a nod to the old school style of Rioja, as my gut feeling is that these very old vines, tucked up high in the hills of Rioja, would really take to older American oak casks. But, that said, this is first rate Rioja just the way it is! 2022-2065. **93.**

2010 La Antigua Clásico Rioja Reserva

The 2010 La Antigua Clásico Rioja Reserva is another excellent wine from this superb *bodegas*, offering up a deep and very elegant bouquet of raspberries, cherries, Rioja spice tones, a bit of meatiness, lovely, stony soil tones, cloves and a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and fairly broad-shouldered in style (this is predominantly Garnacha, with Tempranillo playing a supporting role in the *cépages*), with a fine core of fruit, ripe, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and bouncy finish. This wine is drinking quite well at age nine, but will be even better with another four or five years of bottle age. Fine juice. 2018-2050. **92+.**

2006 Rioja "Viña Tondonia" Reserva- López de Heredia

The 2006 Viña Tondonia Reserva from López de Heredia is a lovely wine in the making, but this is still quite youthful at twelve years of age and has a long way to go until it is really ready for primetime drinking. The bouquet is deep, sappy and promises excellent complexity down the road, while today offering up red and black raspberries, coconut, a touch of clove, salty soil tones, gentle Rioja spice tones and a bit of cedar in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with good soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. I would give this lovely wine still another four to five years in the cellar to allow it to really get into its comfort zone. 2022-2065+. **92.**

1976 Viña Bosconia Rioja "Gran Reserva"-López de Heredia

The 1976 Viña Bosconia Gran Reserva from López de Heredia is drinking very well indeed, but still seems to be in climbing mode and will be even better with a few more years to blossom completely. The wine is beautifully red fruity and spicy on the nose, offering up a constellation of strawberries, cherries, Rioja spice elements (mostly cinnamon and clove), a refined base of soil, a bit of orange zest and a lovely topnote of toasted coconut. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and marvelously transparent, with a fine core of red fruit,

bouncy acids, little remaining tannin and excellent focus and grip on the complex, balanced and tangy finish. This will continue to age very gracefully on its acids, rather than its tannins, and has many decades of life still ahead of it. I suspect it will be even a shade better with another five years' worth of bottle age. 2018-2050+. **94+**.

1968 Viña Bosconia Rioja “Gran Reserva”-López de Heredia

The 1968 Viña Bosconia “Gran Reserva” is now at its apogee of peak drinkability at age fifty and is drinking with marvelous vibrancy and complexity. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of raspberries, cherries, a touch of coconut, lovely clove-like spices, dill, salty soil tones and cigar ash. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and velvety on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, great soil signature, melted tannins, tangy acids and outstanding focus and grip on the very long, very elegant and complex finish. This is simply beautiful. 2018-240. **95.**



Tempranillo vines ready for harvest in Rioja Alavesa.

Rioja Blanco

2017 Viña Otano Rioja Blanco- Bodegas Fuenmayor (screwcap)

The 2017 Viña Otano Rioja Blanco from Bodegas Fuenmayor is composed entirely of Viura and the new release offers up a pretty bouquet of pear, raw almond, salty soil tones and a topnote of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is medium-full, nicely balanced and focused, but a bit pinched on the backend from its screwcap. The acids are good, there is a decent core

here and this wine should be nicely round, complex and generous out of the blocks, but the closure is already starting to scalp the wine a bit on the backend. Right now, one can put this in a decanter for fifteen minutes or so and it stretches out a bit, but permanent reduction is coming soon, so drink it over the next year or two. Under a natural cork, this wine would have the potential longevity of ten to fifteen years and would merit a score three points higher! 2019-2021+? **87.**

2017 Rioja Blanco- Bodega Sierra de Toloño

Sandra Bravo's 2017 Rioja Blanco is a lovely wine in the making, offering up a youthfully complex nose of tart pear, green apple, salty soil tones, raw almond, wild fennel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent soil signature, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is going to be an excellent wine, and though it is already very easy to drink, it is still in climbing mode and will be even more complex with a bit more bottle age. Impressive juice. 2020-2035+. **92.**

Cataluña

2017 El Rumbero- Oriol Artigas (Alella)

The 2017 El Rumbero from Oriol Artigas is made of a blend of fifty percent syrah, thirty percent merlot, fifteen percent garnaxta and five percent of sumoll. They are all planted in the same vineyard, which lies ten kilometers in from the Mediterranean Sea. The wine is bright and complex, offering up a fine bouquet of black cherries, cassis, a touch of pepper, beautiful soil tones, espresso and a hint of *garrigue* in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with moderate backend tannins, good acids and fine length and grip on the gently spritzy finish. This is a young and very classy wine that is quite approachable today, but will be even better with a year or two in the cellar, to allow the tannins to fall away and the wine to really stretch its wings. I love the intensity of flavor here, while the wine staying light on its feet! 2019-2035. **92.**

2017 Las Colinas del Ebro Garnaxta Blanca- Bodegas Abanico (Terra Alta)

I was delighted to see the 2017 vintage of Las Colinas del Ebro Garnaxta Blanca from Bodegas Abanico arrive on my doorstep sealed with a plastic cork, as the last two vintages of this wine have been sealed under screwcap and permanently reduced when I tasted them (with an obviously very good wine buried under the reduction). The 2017 is a ripe and complex wine, coming in at fourteen percent octane and offering up a bouquet of pineapple, sweet grapefruit, white flowers, a fine base of soil tones and a nice touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is broad-shouldered, full-bodied and nicely balanced for its ripeness level, with a very good core of fruit, sound framing acids, fine focus and grip and a long, tasty finish. This is not overly complex, but hits all the right notes and offers up a lot of personality for fifteen dollars per bottle! 2018-2021. **88.**

2017 Las Colinas del Ebro Garnaxta Negra-Syrah- Bodegas Abanico (Terra Alta)

The 2017 Las Colinas del Ebro tinto from Bodegas Abanico is composed of a blend of eighty percent Garnaxta and twenty percent Syrah, with the former hailing from thirty-five to fifty year-old vines and the latter from a twenty-five year-old vineyard. The wine only sees three months in cask during its *elevage*, in a combination of French and American oak and the 2017 vintage comes in at 14.5 percent octane. The wine offers up a ripe and complex nose of black raspberries, a touch of fruitcake, *garrigue*, a fine base of soil, roasted game and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe and chewy, with a broad-shouldered and robust personality,

good depth at the core, firm tannins and a long, slightly heady finish. There is a bit of *sur maturité* elements in the flavor spectrum here and the wine is probably a wee bit closer to fifteen percent than it is 14.5 percent, but there is complexity and depth here as well and if you do not mind the higher octane, there is plenty to enjoy. It's \$15 price point is a hell of a lot more attractive than most Châteauneuf du Papes! This too comes sealed under a plastic cork this year, which is better than last year's screwcap, but I would love to see a move to agglomerated natural corks in the near future, as they should be about the same price and offer the best longer-term aging potential- and this wine would certainly age with the right closure. A tad riper than I would like, but not bad at all! 2018-2030+? **88.**

2016 Beier dels Bardisotts- Oriol Artigas (Alella)

The Beier from Oriol Artigas is a mono-varietal wine produced from the grape of the same name (and completely new to me) grown on a base of granite. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts and raised in old casks for ten months prior to bottling without fining, filtration or added SO₂. The color of the 2016 is quite light (really more dark Rosé than red wine in pigment) and offers up a complex nose of desiccated cherries, rhubarb, bonfire, granitic soil and a topnote of gentle botanicals. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, complex and beautifully transparent in personality, with lovely intensity of flavor, just a whisper of tannin and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is light on its feet and loaded with personality and has a lot more depth and palate authority than one could ever imagine, given its very pale color! 2018-2030+. **91+.**

2016 Gotim Bru- Castell del Remei (Costers del Segre)

The 2016 Gotim Bru bottling from Castell del Remei is comprised of a blend of thirty-five percent each of Garnaxta and Tempranillo and fifteen percent each of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine is an even fourteen percent octane in 2016 and offers up a deep and complex bouquet of cassis, dark berries, cigar wrapper, a good base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe, with a good core of fruit, well-integrated tannins and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This has fine balance and will age very nicely, but deserves at least a few years in the cellar to soften up properly and truly blossom. Good juice. 2022-2045+. **89+.**

2016 Cartoixà- Sicus (Eduard Pié) Penedès

Eduard Pié is a very young winemaker in the southern end of Penedès, farming on heavily limestone soils just six kilometers in from the ocean. The sub-region of the Penedès where he has his vines is called the Massis de Bonastre, which is part of Tarragona. Eduard farms biodynamically and his 2016 Cartoixà was fermented and raised in amphora and comes in at a low octane 10.5 percent. The wine offers up a lovely nose of lemon, wild fennel, limestone, citrus peel, dried flowers and a topnote of salinity. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied and racy, with fine focus and grip, surprisingly fine texture for such a low octane species, and good cut and focus on the long finish. This has a loads of personality without a lot of weight and is a quite unique and impressively complex wine. Good juice. 2018-2025. **89+.**

2016 Cartoixà Brisat- Sicus (Eduard Pié) Penedès

The 2016 Cartoixà Brisat from Eduard Pié is again fermented and raised in amphora and is a very unique white wine that is absolutely loaded with personality. The wine is extremely low in octane, coming in at ten percent, but offers up lovely aromatic complexity in its nose of tart orange, citrus peel, salty soil tones, fresh rosemary, wild fennel and a touch of dried eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is medium-full, crisp and complex, with lovely intensity of flavor, fine

focus and bounce and a long, vibrant finish. This is nicely lean, but lacks for nothing. 2018-2025. **90.**

2016 Sumoll- Sicus (Eduard Pié) Penedès

The 2016 Sumoll from Eduard Pié is a beautifully complex, aromatic middleweight, offering up a fine bouquet of cherries, wild fennel, beautiful spice tones (mostly redolent of clove), a complex base of soil, anise and a bit of balsam bough in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, complex and soil-driven, with a nice core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, a bit of backend tannin and a long, classy finish that closes with a nice touch of bitterness like an Emidio Pepe wine. Fine juice. 2019-2035+. **92.**

2016 l'Avi Arrufi Blanco- Celler Viños Piñol (Terra Alta)

The 2016 l'Avi Arrufi from Celler Viños Piñol is composed entirely of garnaxta blanco. The vines for this bottling hail from a parcel planted in 1920, and the wine is raised in French *barricas*. The 2016 l'Avi Blanco is a ripe wine, coming in at 14.5 percent octane and delivering a complex nose of pear, a touch of fresh pineapple, salty soil tones, fresh almond, white flowers and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and very well-balanced, with excellent depth in the mid-palate, fine soil signature and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This shows no signs of backend heat and is one of the best examples of garnaxta blanco I have tasted in years! First class juice! 2018-2025. **92.**

2016 Mather Teresina Tinto- Celler Viños Piñol (Terra Alta)

The Mather Teresina bottling from Celler Viños Piñol is made from a blend of fifty percent garnacha, thirty percent cariñena and twenty percent of very old vines from the region's rare indigenous grape of Morenillo. The vineyards here are planted at higher elevations on limestone soils. The 2016 Mather Teresina comes in at 14.5 percent octane and offers up a ripe and black fruity nose of cassis, dark berries, roasted game, coffee grounds bonfire, new oak and a nice touch of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and balance, ripe tannins and very good length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This handles its ripeness beautifully and shows no signs of backend heat. It is a young wine and needs a few years in the cellar to allow the tannins to soften up a bit more. Good juice. 2023-2055. **90.**

2015 Peça d'en Blanch Negre "Vinyes Velles"- Oriol Artigas (Alella)

The 2015 Peça d'en Blanch Negre "Vinyes Velles" from Oriol Artigas hails from a vineyard only a kilometer from the ocean, which is planted to a mix of Garnaxta and Pansa Blanca. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts in stainless steel and then aged in old French casks for ten months prior to bottling. The wine offers up outstanding depth in its aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, pomegranate, chicory, lovely, dark soil tones, a bit of espresso, anise and a potpourri of sweet botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven, with tangy acids, moderate, chewy tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long, youthful and nascently complex finish. This is a superb wine in the making, but give it some time in the cellar for those backend tannins to soften up. 2025-2055. **92+.**

2015 Essencial Xarel-lo- Joan Rubió

Joan Rubió was the Technical Director at the large and important Penedès estate of Recarèdo for many years prior to resuscitating his grandparents' old vineyards and starting his own project with the 2015 vintage. His 2015 Essencial Xarel-lo from Joan Rubió macerates for eleven days on its skins prior to being transferred to five hundred liter casks for fermentation and

elevage. The wine offers up a musky and vibrant bouquet of lime, orange peel, salty, chalky soil tones, a bit of wild fennel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and complex, with sound acids, good soil signature and a moderately long, bouncy finish. There is a bit of natural wine wildness here on both the nose and palate, but the wine is drinking well right now and offers up plenty of pleasure, if you do not mind the genre. 2018-2020. **88.**

2015 Obstinat Xarel-lo- Joan Rubió

When first opened, the 2015 Obstinat bottling of Xarel-lo from Joan Rubió is far more “natural wine” inflected on the nose and palate than the Essencial bottling. For some, this will be a positive, and for others, not so much. With some swirling, the nose cleans up to offer scents of lemon, green olive, bread fruit, saline soil elements, dried flowers, a touch of menthol and a topnote of raw almond. On the palate the wine is medium-full, crisp and complex, with a good core, fine soil signature, bright acids and very good length and grip on the slightly wild finish. After first pulling the cork, I really did not like this wine, which I thought was going to prove to volatile and wild for my palate, but with some coaxing, it really changes dramatically and for the better. The bouquet ends up being really fine, and though it never quite cleans up its act on the finish, the natural wine wildness here is a very minor note on the tail end of the finish and the wine really blossoms nicely. Count me as one of the very surprised! 2018-2023? **90.**



The beautiful, rugged vineyard terrain of Priorat.

Priorat

2015 Vega Escal Crianza

The 2015 Vega Escal Crianza is composed of a blend of thirty-nine percent Garnaxta, twenty-five percent Carignan, twenty-one percent Cabernet Sauvignon, eleven percent Syrah and four percent Merlot. The wine is raised in a combination of French and American oak casks for eighteen months prior to bottling and the 2015 comes in at an even fourteen percent alcohol, which is quite moderate for this region in the vintage. The bouquet here is deep and complex, offering up scents of raspberries, cassis, grilled meats, *garrigue*, lovely spice tones, a bit of olive, stony soil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nascently complex, with fine depth at the core, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, well-balanced and promising finish. I really like how the syrah component here adds to the complexity of the wine, as it shows more influence on both the nose and palate than its eleven percent might suggest. This is really good wine in the making, but it deserves some time in the cellar to soften up properly. It is going to be excellent! This bottling sells for \$27 in the US, making it perhaps the single finest value from Priorat that I have tasted in the last twenty years! Impressive juice. 2023-2055. **92.**

2014 Vega Escal Tinto

The 2014 vintage of Vega Escal is comprised of a blend of fifty-five percent garnaxta, twenty-five percent carifena and twenty percent syrah. The wine is raised in a combination of French Allier and American oak casks, but only for six months' time, so as to not get too oaky. This vintage comes in at 14.5 percent alcohol and offers up a complex bouquet of black raspberries, cassis, roasted meats, stony soil tones, *garrigue* and a bit of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, lovely textural sophistication and a long, modestly tannic and complex finish. This is excellent juice, with a sense of restraint that is very hard to find in Priorat! 2020-2050. **92.**

Montsant

2016 Garnaxta- Sindicat la Figuera

The Garnaxta from the Sindicat la Figuera comes in at 14.5 percent octane and hails from vines planted on limestone soils at high altitude. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged in concrete vats for nine months prior to bottling. The 2016 offers up a ripe and lovely nose of raspberries, pomegranate, pepper, lavender, lovely spice tones and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerful, with a nice sense of elegant plushness on the attack, a good core, ripe tannins and impressive length and grip on the complex and slightly heady finish. This really carries its alcohol pretty well and is loaded with personality and soil signature, but one does have to be ready to handle the octane. A very complex and classy example of Garnaxta in a riper, but very well-balanced guise. 2020-2040. **89+.**

Campo de Borja

2017 Garnacha Blanco- Legado del Moncayo (Isaac Fernandez Selección)

The 2017 Garnacha Blanco from Legado del Moncayo shows nicely measured ripeness in this vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and delivering a fine bouquet of pear, a touch of coriander seed, raw almond, salty soil tones, a bit of wild fennel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and very nicely soil-driven in personality, with a

lovely core, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. This is very, very good Garnacha Blanco and an absolute steal at \$15 per bottle here in the states! 2019-2025. **89.**

2016 Dry Muscat- Legado del Moncayo (Isaac Fernandez Selección) Screwcap

This is the first time I have tasted the Dry Muscat from Legado del Moncayo and I like the wine quite well, but it is already showing a bit of reductive issues on the backend of the palate, with the finish a touch pinched and a slightly off, asparagus flavor just starting to poke out on the finish. Last I checked, asparagus was more closure-specific and varietal-specific when tasting Muscat. With some coaxing, the nose offers up a very pretty blend of fresh pear, salty soil tones, a touch of beeswax, spring flowers and a hint of wild fennel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite dry, with a good core of fruit, lovely soil signature and a long, crisp and well-balanced finish that cannot quite shed its reductive vegetal streak on the backend, even with extended time in decanter. This is a really, really good wine, so let's put it under natural cork next vintage!

2017 Garnacha Tinto- Legado del Moncayo (Isaac Fernandez Selección)

The 2017 Garnacha Tinto from Legado del Moncayo is nicely ripe, coming in at fourteen percent octane and delivering a classic varietal nose of black raspberries, roasted venison, pepper, *garrigue*, a touch of celery seed and a complex base of stony soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and impressively soil-driven, with a rock solid core, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and very well-balanced finish. This is an insanely good value at \$11 per bottle here in the states and reminds me of when Châteauneuf du Pape was the bargain in French wines back in the early 1980s! It is approachable today, but will also age very nicely and will be even better with a few years in the cellar to let the tannins soften up a bit more. A great value! 2019-2035. **90.**

Utiel-Requana

2016 Bovale

The 2016 Bovale comes in at fourteen percent octane and offers up a lovely bouquet of cassis, sweet dark berries, a touch of coffee grounds, dark soil tones, a bit of roasted game and a gentle topnote of tree bark. On the palate the wine is ripe, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a nice touch of plushness on the attack, a good core, fairly sturdy, but well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced and complex finish. This is approachable today, but will be even better with a few years in the cellar to allow the tannins to soften up a bit. This is a great value, as Bobal so often is! 2018-2035. **90.**

Yecla

2016 Carro- Bodegas Señorío Barahonda

The 2016 Carro from Bodegas Señorío Barahonda is made from a *cépages* of fifty percent Monastrell, twenty percent each of Syrah and Merlot and ten percent Tempranillo. The vines are not particularly young, having been planted in 1979, at an elevation of 713 meters. The wine is fermented and aged entirely in stainless steel and offers up a ripe and complex nose of cassis, dark berries, hung game, coffee bean, dark soil tones, *garrigue* and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe and full-bodied, with a fine, plush core of fruit, good soil signature, moderate, chewy tannins and fine length and grip on the complex and slightly warm finish. This is listed at 14.5 percent octane, but carries it quite well and is a fine, robust and broad-shouldered bottle that delivers a ton of personality for a moderate price tag! 2019-2040. **88.**

2016 Bobal “Estenas”- Félix Martínez Roda (plastic cork)

The 2016 Bobal “Estenas” from Félix Martínez Roda comes in at a nicely measured thirteen percent octane and offers up a lovely bouquet of black cherries, woodsmoke, coffee bean, a fine base of soil and a lovely array of gentle botanicals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly broad-shouldered, with a fine core, very good soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and well-balanced finish. This is approachable today, but will be even better with a year or two in the cellar to allow the tannins to soften up a bit more on the backend. I really wish it was sealed with a natural cork of some kind, as I have not had good luck aging wines under plastic corks and this wine has the structure to age nicely, if it is not impeded by its artificial cork. 2019-2030? **89.**

Almansa

2017 Garnacha Tintorera “Albahra” - Envínate (Almansa)

As I have mentioned in the past, the superb Albahra bottling from Envínate is produced from thirty year-old Garnacha Tintorera (or Alicante Bouschet). The wine is vinified with fifty percent whole clusters, indigenous yeasts and the raised in old *barriques*. The 2017 vintage of this fine bottling has just arrived here in the US, so I had the pleasure to be able to taste two vintages in the span of a few weeks. The wine is a touch lower octane than the previous vintages I have tasted, coming in at an even thirteen percent and offering up a refined and almost sappy bouquet of cassis, black cherries, roasted meats, beautiful spice tones, fine soil signature, lavender, a bit of cigar smoke and a gentle topnote of Alicante Bouschet’s autumnal leafiness. On the palate the wine is young, full and tightly-knit out of the blocks, with a superb core of fruit, lovely mineral drive, moderate tannins and a long, complex, well-balanced and slightly peppery finish. This is going to be excellent and perhaps even a bit more soil-driven than the previous three vintages, but it is a young wine and deserves at least a bit of time in the cellar to blossom a bit from behind its good structural chassis. It will be approachable by mid-summer of next year, but I am going to put my bottles away for five to seven years and see what the future might bring! 2019-2045+. **93+.**

2016 Garnacha Tintorera “Albahra” - Envínate (Almansa)

The 2016 Albahra again comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol (the same as the 2014 and 2015 versions) and is a deep, complex and very classy wine on both the nose and palate. The very complex bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of dark berries, bonfire, a touch of cola, lavender, a great base of soil and a lovely mix of spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex finish. It is perfectly approachable today, but the tannins are still a touch chewy on the backend and I would try to tuck it away for a few years before having at it in earnest. This is just one of the best bottlings from the very talented team at Envínate and one of the great sleepers in the entire world of wine! 2020-2045+. **93+.**

Sierra de Gredos- Viños de Madrid

2017 Tinto- 4 Monos Viticultores (Viños de Madrid- Sierra de Gredos)

The 2017 vintage of the 4 Monos Tinto arrived in the late fall in the US market and I was delighted to have a chance to taste it right on the heels of the fine 2016 version. This vintage is a touch riper than the ’16, coming in at fourteen percent, but the wine is pure, bright and focused on both the nose and palate and shows no signs of excess ripeness. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, desiccated raspberries, spiced meats, a touch of *garrigue*,

savory elements, a fine base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively transparent, with a fine core, ripe, moderate tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is a bit more forward than the 2016 version and will drink well right from the outset. 2018-2040. **91.**



2016 Grio Blanco- 4 Monos Viticultores (Viños de Madrid- Sierra de Gredos)

The 2016 Grio Blanco from 4 Monos Viticultores is a beautifully sophisticated wine in its aromatic constellation, wafting from the glass in a blend of tart orange, a hint of green olive, salty minerality, dried flowers and a bit of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full, focused and nicely complex, with a good core of fruit, fine transparency down to its stony minerality, good framing acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and classy finish that closes with a hint of beeswax. 4 Monos makes superb wines and this is no exception! 2018-2023+. **92.**

2016 Tinto- 4 Monos Viticultores (Viños de Madrid- Sierra de Gredos)

As I mentioned in my note on the 2015, the blended Tinto from 4 Monos is composed of a mix of eighty-five percent Garnacha, eight percent Cariñena and seven percent Morenillo. The wine includes fifty percent whole clusters and is fermented solely with indigenous yeasts. The *elevage* is in a combination of three, four and five hundred liter, old barrels for nine months prior to bottling. The 2016 4 Monos Tinto is fairly light in color and comes in at 13.5 percent octane this year, offering up a beautifully complex nose of black cherries, *garrigue*, dried berries, dried

eucalyptus, clove-like spices and a fine base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent, with a good core, lovely bounce and grip, a bit of ripe tannin and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is still fairly primary in personality and should blossom nicely with a bit more bottle age, but I had no trouble drinking the bottle in its youthful guise. 2019-2035+. **90+**.

2015 Car “Cadalso de Los Vidrios”- 4 Monos Viticultores (Sierra de Gredos)

Car is 4 Monos’ varietal bottling of Cariñena planted in a vineyard of sand over granite bedrock. The 2015 version comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a precise and classy bouquet of black cherries, cassis, pepper, a touch of anise, beautiful minerality, wild fennel and cola. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and transparent, with a good core, fine focus and grip, moderate tannins and a long, youthful and beautifully balanced finish. This is approachable today, but still a young wine and will be even better with a few years’ worth of bottle age. Very impressive and elegant juice. 2022-2045. **92+**.

2015 La Danza del Viento “Molino Quemado”- 4 Monos Viticultores (Sierra de Gredos)

The 2015 Molino Quemado bottling from 4 Monos is pretty ripe, coming in at a full 14.5 percent octane, but it is also impressively well-balanced. As I mentioned in my note on the 2014 version, this cuvée produced from seventy-five year-old Garnacha vines planted in rocky, granitic soils, fermented with eighty percent whole clusters and raised in older, three and five hundred liter barrels. The wine offers up a beautiful bouquet, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black raspberries, *garrigue*, clove-like spices, lovely meaty tones, a bit of bonfire, dried eucalyptus, stony soil and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent (particularly for its octane), with a fine core of fruit, great soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, complex and nicely balanced finish. On the backend, once can sense this is 14.5 percent, but it is emphatically not hot and lacks nothing in terms of precision or soil signature. Lovely juice. 2022-2040+. **92+**.

2015 La Danza del Viento “la Isilla”- 4 Monos Viticultores (Sierra de Gredos)

As I mentioned last year, the “la Isilla” bottling from 4 Monos Viticultores hails from a very, very old vineyard that is nearly all Garnacha, with just a bit of Cariñena blended in. The vines are over ninety years of age and the parcel was abandoned for many years, with the team at 4 Monos having spent several years resuscitating the vineyard, with 2014 the first year that the team was able to get enough grapes to produce a wine from this vineyard. The 2015 is a fine follow-up to the very good 2014 inaugural vintage, with the wine tipping the scales at 13.5 percent alcohol (very civilized for Garnacha!) and offering up an utterly refined bouquet of black cherries, black raspberries, spices meats, cloves, complex minerality, woodsmoke, a bit of wild fennel, *garrigue* and a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in personality, with a solid core, great transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, ripe and complex finish. The weightlessness of this wine on the palate is really impressive and quite surprising for old vine Garnacha. This is a far cry from a powerhouse and is nicely understated in style, but it is very long and persistent and really grows on you over the course of a meal. 2018-2035. **92**.

Tierra de Castilla

2017 Sauvignon Blanc- Trencalós (screwcap)

The 2017 Sauvignon Blanc from Trencalós is a good solid wine, but this particularly bottle was already getting a bit reductive and had a bit of over-cooked asparagus elements

starting to poke through on both the nose and palate. With some aeration, this blows off a bit, but it is definitely not the grassy component of the varietal, but is from the closure. Eventually, once the reduction lifts a bit, the wine offers up a nose of grapefruit, lemon, salty soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full and bouncy, with a solid core and good length and grip on the balanced finish. The reduction hangs a bit longer on the backend than it does in the nose and I would drink this wine up pronto. 2019-2020. **86.**

2017 Tempranillo- Trecalós (screwcap)

The 2017 Tempranillo from Trecalós is fermented and raised entirely in stainless steel and does not see any oak aging prior to bottling. The wine is grown on sandy, clay and limestone soils at between 700 and 850 meters above sea level, which keeps its alcohol nicely in check, with the 2017 coming in at thirteen percent octane. The wine offers up a ripe nose of black cherries, cassis, a hint of pepper, woodsmoke and lovely spic tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and nicely balanced, with good stuffing at the core, fine soil signature, moderate tannins and good length and grip on the finish. This is not super complex, but it is very good for its price, which is ten dollars a bottle here in the US! I would, of course, prefer to see it sealed under an agglomerated cork, but this shows no ill effects from its screwcap (as of yet) and is a terrific value. 2018-2025? **88.**

Extremadura

2016 Tinto Amarela “Parcela Valdemedel”- Envínate (Extremadura)

I have not seen this bottling from the talented quartet at Envínate since the 2013 vintage. This is made from the Trincadeira grape, which was traditionally grown widely in the Alentejo region of Portugal, an hour to the west of Extremadura. Its finicky nature has seen a lot of it replaced in the Alentejo in recent times. As I have mentioned previously, the Trincadeira grown in the Parcela Valdemedel benefits from the north-facing orientation of the vineyard, the five hundred meter elevation and the fine base of limestone in the soil, which helps offset some of the heat of the region and which allows the grape to thrive. The 2016 Parcela Valdemedel again comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol (low octane for Extremadura!) and offers up a ripe and complex nose of sweet black currants, a touch of black raspberry, tree bark, cigar smoke, dark soil tones, chicory and a nice touch of the varietal’s leafy topnotes. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and fully-bodied, with a nice touch of sappiness at the core, lovely mineral drive, moderate, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is great juice, albeit off the beaten path to those not familiar with this lovely varietal. 2018-2040. **93.**

Alicante

2017 Viña Ulises- Gutiérrez de la Vega (Alicante)

The 2017 Viña Ulises from Gutiérrez de la Vega is a tad riper than the 2016, coming at fourteen percent, but this is still pretty low in alcohol for Alicante. As I mentioned last year, the *cépages* here is sixty percent Giró and forty percent Monastrell. The wine offers up a nose of baked black cherries and raspberries, *garrigue*, hung game, lovely spice tones, soil, fruit cake and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, powerful and slightly raisiny in personality, with broad shoulders, plenty of depth at the core and a bit of heat poking out on the long and Mediterranean finish. This is okay, and in fact, very good for its genre, but a bit above my comfort zone for octane level this year and I quite preferred the 2016 version. 2018-2030. **87.**

2016 Cono 4- Primitivo Quiles (plastic cork)

The 2016 Cono 4 from Primitivo Quiles is a very good bottle of Monastrell, with the ripeness presented in a robust 14.5 percent octane and the wine loaded with personality on both the nose and palate. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, spit-roasted meats, dark soil tones, a bit of coffee grinds, cola and a nice touch of upper register spice tones. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe and roasted, with a good core of fruit and fine soil signature, modest tannins and a bit of uncovered alcohol poking out on the long and complex finish. This is a good, solid bottle of wine, but I would love to see it just a touch lower in octane. 2019-2028. **88.**

2016 Moscatel Seco “Casta Diva Cosecha Dorada ”- Gutiérrez de la Vega (Alicante)

The Moscatel Seco from Gutiérrez de la Vega is produced from thirty to fifty year-old bush vines of Moscatel, fermented in stainless steel and then aged in older, larger casks for seven months prior to bottling. The 2016 version offers up a beautiful expressive and floral bouquet of pear, acacia blossoms, citrus blossoms, salty soil tones and a touch of lavender. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and wide open and tasty, with a good core, nice soil signature and a long, vibrant and succulent finish. This is not particularly high acid, as this is Alicante after all and a wee bit warm in the summer months, but there is plenty of freshness and bounce here. 2018-2020. **88.**



2015 Bodegas Curii Tinto- Uvas Y Vinos Alberto & Violeta

The 2015 Curii Tinto is riper than the last couple of vintages from this dynamic couple of Alberto Redrado and Violeta Gutiérrez, coming in at a hefty 15.5 percent alcohol in the hot summer of 2015. As readers may recall, this is their old vine bottling of Garnacha produced up in the mountains of Alicante. The vineyards are all on limestone and the wine is fermented with fifty percent whole clusters and given an old school, leisurely *elevage* of one year in old French *barriques* and an additional year in even older, American oak *foudre* prior to bottling. I had loved this bottling in both 2013 and 2014, and though the 2015 is way above my octane comfort level, there is still a lot to like here for the intrepid. The 2015 Curii offers up the beautifully complex aromatic constellation that has made this such a stunning wine in less buxom years, as it jumps from the glass in an extroverted blend of raspberries, eucalyptus, lavender, meaty undertow, lovely soil tones, cloves and sandalwood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core, superb soil signature, chewy tannins and surprisingly fine balance and focus for its higher octane level. The finish is very long, chewy and complex and only moderately warm, which is pretty impressive, given the 15.5 percent listing! This is superb wine, and though I would love to see it back down at 14.5 percent, as it was in 2013 and 2014, this was the vintage of 2015 and this is Alicante, so some years are going to be this way. The wine is outstanding in quality, just be aware that it is pretty heady fare! 2020-2045. **90+** (add at least three points if the alcohol level does not bother you, as the complexity here is very impressive indeed).

2012 Raspay Reserva- Primitivo Quiles

The Raspay Reserva from Primitivo Quiles is made entirely from the Monastrell varietal, from vines that are more than eighty years of age. The 2012 Raspay comes in at an even fourteen percent octane and offers up a ripe nose of baked dark berries, roasted meats, lovely, *garrigue*-like spice tones, dark soil, a bit of charred wood and just a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit raisiny in personality, with a good core, fine soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, complex finish. Alicante is a hot weather climate and this wine shows the personality of a warm region, but there is depth, complexity and balance here as well and this is a very tasty bottle that is true to its roots. 2018-2030+. **88.**

Jerez

2016 Atlántida Blanco- Alberto Orte (Cádiz)

The 2016 Atlántida Blanco from Alberto Orte is made from the ancient grape variety of Vijiriega. This is a subsection of the Jerez and Sherry is king down here, but Señor Orte has made this dry white wine from grapes normally consigned to produce Fino or Manzanilla. The grapes are foot-trodden and then fermented in older *demi-muids* and then spend a year aging in this six hundred liter casks, prior to being racked to stainless steel tanks for five months prior to bottling. The 2016 Atlántida Blanco delivers a fine and complex bouquet of orange peel, salty soil tones, a bit of green olive, ocean breeze, nutty elements and a whisper of vanillin oak from the older *demi-muids*. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and long, with a good core, sound acids and excellent soil signature on the long and well-balanced finish. This is twelve percent octane and shares some Fine taste elements on the backend, but is low octane and all too easy to drink. Fine and utterly unique juice. 2018-2025+. **90.**

2015 Ube “Pago Maina”- Bodegas Cota 45 (Ramiro Ibáñez)

The 2015 Ube “Pago Maina” from Ramiro Ibáñez is produced from a single vineyard planted to forty year-old Palomino vines, in a chalky soil that is layered heavily with marine fossils. The wine offers up noteworthy aromatic complexity in its mélange of tart orange, nutty tones, marinated citrus peel, kaleidoscopic chalky, salty soil tones and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and very long on the backend, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and a long, vibrant and well-balanced finish. This is 13.5 percent alcohol, so a good, ripe wine, but far lower than the fortified Sherries of the region and a lovely alternative to Manzanilla for a dish that would work well with that pairing, but where a lower alcohol might be desired. 2018-2025+. **90.**

Canary Islands Blanco**2017 Diego Seco- Bermejo (Lanzarote)**

The 2017 Diego Seco from Bermejo is a lovely wine, with a touch of Loire Valley sauvignon blanc character shining through in its complex bouquet of grapefruit, lime peel, a touch of cut grass, discreet notes of petrol, citrus blossoms and a beautiful base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and very mineral in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, bright acids, excellent focus and grip and a long, youthfully complex finish. This is very fine juice that is tasty already and will age quite gracefully. 2019-2030. **91.**

2017 Malvasía Volcánica Seco- Bermejo (Lanzarote)

The 2017 Malvasía Volcánica Seco from Bermejo offers up a pure and very transparent bouquet of lemon, bread fruit, complex, volcanic minerality, lemongrass and a touch of lime peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with superb mineral drive, lovely focus and grip and a long, zesty and beautifully balanced finish. This is a lovely bottle, with a bit broader-shoulders than the Diego Seco, but the same precision and mineral personality. 2019-2030. **92.**

2017 Benje “Las Arenas” Blanco- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Benje “Las Arenas” Blanco from Envínate is made from Listán Blanco, with sixty percent of the blend fermented in cement tanks and forty percent in old Burgundy casks. These old vines are on their own indigenous roots and are not trained, but crawl along the ground. The 2017 offers up a fine, youthful nose of peach, a touch of green olive, volcanic soil tones, sea salts, wild fennel, a touch of cherry skin and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature, bright acids and lovely focus and balance on the long and still quite primary finish. This is a wine that is coiled to spring and deserves a year or two in the cellar to really blossom; it will be outstanding. 2020-2035+. **92+.**

2017 Forestera Blanca “Paisaje des las Islas”- Tajinaste (Tenerife)

The 2017 Forestera Blanca “Paisaje des las Islas” from Tajinaste is a wine made from purchased grapes. The 2017 version offers up a focused and complex bouquet of pear, a hint of green olive, sea salts, a lovely base of soil, fresh almond and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and well-balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, fine cut and grip and a long, soil-driven and complex finish. Good juice. 2018-2030. **91+.**



2016 Benje Blanco- Envínate (Tenerife)

The 2016 Benje Blanco from Envínate is composed entirely of *franc de pied* Listán Blanco, which hails from seven different plots of old vines scattered around Tenerife. The cuvée is seventy-five percent quickly pressed, but twenty-five percent undergoes an extended skin contact prior to fermentation of two weeks or more, and then the blend is aged in a combination of sixty percent cement and forty percent old French barrels. The 2016 Benje offers up a deep and complex nose of lemon, tart orange, beautiful minerality, a bit of *flora*-like elements from the extended skin contact, sea salts and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a rock solid core, great mineral drive, snappy acids and superb focus and grip on the vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2019-2035+. **92.**

2016 Táganan Blanco- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Táganan Blanco from Envínate is made from a variety of grapes native to Tenerife, including Listán Blanco, Albillo, Criollo, Marmajuelo, Gual and Malvasía, not to mention some varieties that were planted so long ago that no one is really sure what they are today. The 2016 Táganan Blanco is drinking beautifully today, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of tart pear, lemon, sea salts, a touch of skin contact complexity, orange peel, notes of wild fennel and a hint of lavender and a gorgeous base of volcanic soil. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and beautifully soil-driven in personality, with a superb core of fruit, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the refined and vibrant finish. This is superb wine. 2019-2040. **93+.**

2015 Albillo Criollo “Los Loros”- Juan Francisco Fariña Pérez (Tenerife)

The 2015 Albillo Criollo “Los Loros” from Juan Francisco Fariña Pérez is a beautifully aromatic wine that jumps from the glass in a complex mélange of tart orange, beeswax, wild fennel, ocean breeze, citrus peel and a lovely base of salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with fine cut and grip, very good focus and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. There is almost a touch of backend tannin here which really adds to the grip on the emphatic and very tasty finish. 2018-2030. **92.**

Canary Islands Rosado

2017 La Araucaria Rosado- Dolores Cabrera Fernández (Tenerife)

The 2017 La Araucaria Rosado from Dolores Cabrera Fernández is a lovely bottle of rosé, offering up a complex bouquet of cherries, rhubarb, lovely Tenerife botanicals, volcanic soils and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite vinous in style, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and a long, complex finish that closes with a lovely pull and tug between fruit tones and gentle bitterness. This is more like a light red wine than a Rosado, but it is very good at the table and I can only imagine how tasty it would be at dinner on Tenerife! 2018-2025. **91.**

Canary Islands Tinto

2017 Listán Negra- Bermejo (Lanzarote)

The 2017 Listán Negra from Bermejo is a deep, complex and youthful red wine that shows excellent promise, but could do with just a bit of bottle age. The promising nose offers up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a bit of road tar, superbly complex minerality, coffee grounds, cigar smoke and a lovely topnote of botanicals. On the palate the wine is very pure, full-bodied and transparent, with a sweet core of black fruit, gentle tannins and a very long, balanced and still fairly primary finish. This is not unapproachable today, but it is still a puppy and it deserves at least a modicum of time in the cellar to completely blossom. 2020-2040+. **92.**

2017 Vidueño de Santiago del Teide- A Chingao Vineyards y Envínate (Tenerife)

The Vidueño de Santiago del Teide bottling from A Chingao Vineyards and Envínate is made from an old, tiny parcel of Listán Blanco and Listán Preto, which are co-planted on ungrafted vines on the volcanic slopes of the mountains of Tenerife. There are only three barrels of this wine, fermented with indigenous yeasts and bottled without added SO₂. The 2017 vintage of this lovely middleweight offers up a complex nose of red berries, woodsmoke, volcanic soils, a nice touch of Tenerife botanicals and pepper. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, complex and soil-driven, with excellent focus and grip, fine complexity and a bit of backend tannin perking up the long and tangy finish. This is lovely wine that could do with a few years in the cellar to properly unlock its secondary layers of complexity. Fine juice. 2020-2040+. **92.**

2017 Migan “Parcela Habanera” Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Parcela Habanera is one of two vineyards that comprise the Migan blended bottling (please see below for the note on the 2016 Migan), planted entirely to Listán Negro, with these vines probably well over one hundred years of age. The vines sit at the highest vineyard elevation on Tenerife on a bed of volcanic sand. The 2017 Parcela Habanera has just been released and is a touch lower in octane than the 2016 version (12 versus 12.5 percent). The wine is still very young and reductive, so it takes some time to open up once it is poured, but eventually blossoms to offer up scents of dark berries, cherries, smoked herbs, volcanic soil, tree bark, dried eucalyptus and a nice touch of cola. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused

and soil-driven, with a fine core of fruit, a tightly-knit profile, moderate tannins and a long, vibrant and tangy finish. This is still quite primary and needs a bit of bottle age to start to reveal some of its secondary layers, and I would opt for drinking the 2016 now and letting the 2017 slumber in the cellar for a handful of years before having at it in earnest. It is going to be an outstanding wine with a bit of cellaring. 2022-2050. **94.**

2017 Migan “Parcela Tio Luis” Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The 2017 Migan “Parcela Tio Luis” Tinto from Envínate is a beautifully refined and complex example of Tenerife Tinto, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a sophisticated blend of cherries, pomegranate, sweet and savory herb tones, a touch of green peppercorn, woodsmoke and volcanic soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with an excellent core, even better soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. Superb juice. 2020-2050. **93+.**

2017 La Araucaria Tinto- Dolores Cabrera Fernández (Tenerife)

The La Araucaria Tinto from Dolores Cabrera Fernández is composed entirely of Listán Negro that hails from vines in excess of one hundred years of age. The 2017 vintage of La Araucaria Tinto offers up a bright and complex nose of sweet black fruit, pepper, volcanic minerality, lovely botanicals, bonfire and lovely saline topnotes. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully defined by its underlying *terroir*, with a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is really a beautiful bottle of upper elevation, very elegant Tenerife tinto. Gotta love it when the vines’ age makes you feel young again! 2019-2040. **93.**

2016 Vidueño de Santiago del Teide- A Chingao Vineyards y Envínate (Tenerife)

The 2016 Vidueño de Santiago del Teide bottling from A Chingao Vineyards and Envínate is a light ruby red and offers up a complex bouquet of strawberries, tree bark, white pepper, volcanic minerality, vinesmoke and a lovely potpourri of Canary Islands’ botanicals. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, bright and intensely flavored, with lovely balance and grip, very modest tannins, good acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is twelve percent alcohol and beautifully light on its feet, yet loaded with personality. An excellent wine. 2018-2040. **92.**

2016 Benje Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Benje Tinto bottling from Envínate is primarily old vine Listán Preto, with some Tintilla blended in. The vines are all on ungrafted roots and grow at an elevation of a thousand meters above sea level. The 2016 Benje Tinto is an excellent wine, offering up the smoky and botanical Tenerife profile of red berries, bonfire, pepper, volcanic soil tones and a wide variety of savory herb elements in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, tangy and full-bodied, with beautiful transparency, fine intensity of flavor and moderate backend tannins perking up the long, complex and very promising finish. I would give this at least a few years to soften up a bit on the finish, but with a bit of decanting time, it is already pretty tasty! 2021-2050. **92+.**

2016 Migan Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Migan tinto bottling from Envínate is made of old, wandering, un-trained Listán Negro vines, from two different vineyards. Sixty percent of the blend hails from the La Habanera vineyard, which sits at six hundred meters above sea level on a bed of volcanic soils, and forty percent from the San Antonio vineyard, which lies further down the slope at three hundred and fifty meters and includes quite a bit of clay mixed in with the volcanic sand. The grapes from the

two vineyards are fermented separately in cement, after foot-trodding and then aged for eleven months in a combination of older 228 and 600 liter barrels. The 2016 Migan delivers lovely aromatic complexity in its mix of cassis, tree bark, dark berries, chicory, woodsmoke, lovely botanicals and a complex base of volcanic soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and nicely structured out of the blocks, with a fine core of fruit, excellent transparency, a bit of ripe tannin and excellent length and grip on the youthful finish. This could use a couple of years in the cellar to soften up a bit more, and is going to be terrific when it starts to blossom. 2020-2045+. **92+**.

2016 Migan “Parcela Habanera” Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Parcela Habanera is made solely from the higher elevation vineyard, as the name suggests. The 2016 version is superb and more ethereal on the nose than the straight Migan 2016, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of sweet red and dark berries, bonfire, chicory, beautiful volcanic minerality, pepper, a bit of roasted gamebird and savory herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very intensely flavored, with a superb core, lovely soil signature and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, complex and tangy finish. This is longer, more elegant and more complex than the regular bottling and a gorgeous bottle of Tenerife Tinto! 2020-2050. **94+**.

2016 Palo Blanco- Envínate (Tenerife)

The Palo Blanco bottling from Envínate hails from a very old parcel of one hundred year-old vines grown at six hundred meters above sea level on Tenerife. The variety is Listán Blanco and the grapes are pressed as whole clusters and fermented in cement prior to being racked into 2500 liter *foudres* for ten months of *elevage*. The 2016 Palo Blanco is a stunning young wine, offering up a complex and vibrant bouquet of lemon, a touch of blood orange, beeswax, salty minerality, fresh almond and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is high class juice by any measure! 2018-2030. **93+**.

2016 Táganan Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

The 2016 Táganan Tinto from Envínate is a lovely follow-up to their beautiful 2015 version, rife with all of the botanical complexity on the nose and palate of top Canary Islands red wine. Readers may recall that this wine is made from an ancient field blend of grapes and no one living knows what is planted in this parcel, but all agree it makes excellent wines. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a potpourri of spice and herb tones, with notes of dark berries, green peppercorn, bonfire and volcanic soil tones adding to the aromatic smorgasbord. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish, complex and very soil-driven, with tangy acids, modest tannins and excellent length and grip on the bouncy and very complex finish. A lovely and classic bottle. 2018-2035+. **92**.

2016 Táganan “Parcela Margalagua” Tinto- Envínate (Tenerife)

Readers may recall that the Táganan “Parcela Margalagua” from Envínate is made from a field blend that includes Listán Negro and Negramoll, amongst a fairly large number of other grape varieties. The vines here are all over one hundred years of age and the 2016 version is a stellar bottle, offering up a bright and complex bouquet of red berries, a touch of pomegranate, sweet Tenerife botanicals, pepper, a complex base of minerality, tree bark, cola and acorns. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish, intensely flavored and very transparent, with a fine core, seamless, moderate tannins, tangy acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long and

complex finish. This is a beautiful wine, loaded with personality and floating across the palates like a ship upon calm seas. Great juice. 2018-2045. **94.**

2016 La Araucaria Tinto- Dolores Cabrera Fernández (Tenerife)

I reviewed the very good 2015 La Araucaria Tinto from Dolores Cabrera Fernández in the last report on Spanish wines in the spring of this year and was very happy to find the 2016 amongst my box of samples for this article. The bouquet offers up that classic Tenerife blend of dark berries, a bit of pomegranate, Canary Island botanicals, a fine base of soil, a bit of tree bark, espresso, gentle meatiness and a bit of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and impressively transparent, with a fine core, moderate tannins and excellent length and grip on the youthfully complex and very well-balanced finish. This is a lovely wine that could use a couple of years in the cellar to soften up a bit, but which will be outstanding once it has started to blossom. I love the touch of backend bitterness here that reminds me quite a bit of Emidio Pepe's Montepulciano. Great juice. 2021-2045+. **93.**

2016 Tradicional Tinto- Frontón de Oro (Gran Canaria)

The 2016 Tradicional Tinto from Frontón de Oro is quite a ripe wine for the Canary Islands, coming in at 14.5 percent octane. The wine is made entirely from Listán Negro and aged in American oak casks, with one out of eight new. The wine offers up a ripe and nicely expressive bouquet of red and black cherries, lovely botanicals, dark soil tones, pepper and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and soil-driven, with lovely depth of fruit and focus, just a bit of backend tannin and a long, complex finish. The wine shows no signs of its alcohol level until the finish, as it is pure, transparent and nicely precise, but there is a bit of backend, uncovered alcohol on the finish. It is a wee bit too hot for my palate, but add four points to my score, if you are a bit less sensitive to higher octanes, as there is plenty of complexity and minerality here in abundance. 2019-2035. **88.**

2016 Baboso Negro- Ignios Orígenes- Borja Pérez González (Tenerife)

The 2016 Baboso Negro from Borja Pérez's Ignios Orígenes winery is another pretty ripe wine by the standards of Tenerife, as this vintage comes in at a hefty 14.5 percent octane. However, the wine carries its octane very well and is not hot at all on the backend and is impressively well-balanced. The bouquet is ripe and deep, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, charred wood, sarsaparilla, complex botanicals and a superb base of saline soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven, with a good core of fruit, fine complexity and just a bit of backend tannin perking up the long and tangy finish. There is a bit of volatile acidity here on both the nose and palate, but it is not particularly egregious and heightens the aromatics a bit (at least for the present). Due to the VA, I would opt for drinking this on the young side, despite its bit of tannin, as it may become less stable structurally with extended bottle age. But, for drinking early on, it is loaded with personality. 2019-2030+? **90.**

2016 Artífice Tinto- Borja Pérez González (Tenerife)

The 2016 Artífice Tinto from Borja Pérez is composed entirely of Listán Negro, which he makes from purchased grapes and then ferments in cement and ages in a combination of one old *foudre* and one even older French *barrique*. The wine is characteristically light in color and offers up a lovely nose of dried cherries, a bit of blood orange, dried herb tones, vinesmoke, volcanic soil and sea salts. On the palate the wine is medium-full, complex and very transparent, with a good core of fruit, impeccable balance, lovely focus and grip and a long, modestly tannic and vibrant finish. This is an excellent wine. 2018-2040. **91.**

2015 Tintilla- Frontón de Oro (Gran Canaria)

The 2015 Tintilla from Frontón de Oro is raised in older American oak casks for all of four months during its *elevage*, so this is not a particularly oaky wine. The 2015 version comes in at fourteen percent alcohol and offers up a fine bouquet of dark berries, bonfire, hung game, chicory, salty soil tones, just a whisper of US oak tones and a beautifully complex array of spice elements. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, poised and very complex finish. This is simply outstanding and one of the best wines I have yet tasted from Frontón de Oro! 2018-2040. 93.



And a Few Very, Very Good Portuguese Wines

Alentejo

2017 A Touriga Vai Nua- Antonio Maçanita

The 2017 A Touriga Vai Nua from Antonio Maçanita is made entirely from Touriga Nacional, as the name implies, and sees no oak aging at all during its *elevage*. The wine comes in at fourteen percent octane and offers up a deep and ripe nose of black cherries, blueberries, cigar smoke, a bit of shoe polish, dark soil tones and meaty overtones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and well-balanced, with a good core, ripe tannins and good length and grip on the broad-shouldered finish. From my couple of trips to the Alentejo, I have come to the

impression that I like Touriga Nacional best when blended with other varietals, for it can be a touch plodding on its own. This is a good, complex example, but it does not change my opinion that this grape shines best in blends in this region. 2018-2035+. **88.**

2016 Branco de Talha “Fita Preta”- António Maçerita

The 2016 Branco de Talha “Fita Preta” from António Maçerita is fermented and aged in amphora. The wine delivers a fine aromatic package of dried apricot, a hint of green olive, wild fennel, orange peel and salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with a good core of fruit, sound framing acids and impressive length on the complex finish. This is really a well done amphora wine, but it will probably be best to drink up over the next handful of years, as the acids here are adequate, rather than snappy. 2019-2022+? **89.**

2009 La Coartada “Grande Escolha”- Adega Familiar Eladio Piñeiro

The La Coartada Grand Reserve bottling from Eladio Piñeiro is composed of eighty percent Aragonez (Tempranillo), fifteen percent Alicante Bouschet and five percent Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine spends fully four years in oak casks before being racked to stainless steel tanks, where it spends an additional three years prior to bottling. Seven years *elevage*! The 2009 vintage comes in a robust 14.5 percent alcohol and offers up a ripe and very enticing bouquet of black cherries, a bit of cassis, gentle spice tones, a bit of meatiness, chocolate and a lovely foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite velvety on the attack at ten years of age, with a fine core of fruit, good focus and complexity and a bit of backend heat poking out on the long finish. This is a really good wine, but to my palate, it needs to be a half point lower in octane to realize its full potential. At 14.5 percent, it is just a touch too heady on the backend for my palate. But, there is admirable depth and complexity here! 2018-2030+. **88.**

2007 La Coartada “Grande Escolha”- Adega Familiar Eladio Piñeiro

The 2007 La Coartada Grand Reserve is a pretty ripe wine, tipping the scales at 14.5 percent octane and offering up deep and complex bouquet of red and black cherries, lovely, clove-like spice tones, a bit of meatiness, dried berries and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and complex, with a good core of fruit, still moderate tannins and just a bit of backend heat poking out on the long finish. This is a very well-made wine, but its octane level is a fairly heavy load to carry over seven years of *elevage*, and there is a bit of backend raisining to the fruit tones as a result. At a bit lower octane, this would be brilliant, but it is still a pretty good drink at 14.5 percent or so. 2018-2030+. **88.**

Bairrada and Dão

While I have had the pleasure to visit Portugal on three occasions in the last several years, I have not yet had the pleasure to taste in the regions of Dão and Bairrada, and this is high up on my “to do list” for coming years. The two regions lie about halfway between the two principal cities of Portugal, Lisbon and Porto, running from just inland from the Atlantic coast about one hundred kilometers or so to the east. Bairrada is the more westerly of the two contiguous regions, with the Atlantic Ocean’s climactic conditions playing a significant role in the vineyards of Bairrada, so that rainfall here is plentiful during the year and temperatures are more moderate than further inland in Dão. The vineyards tend to lie on a patchwork of small

hillsides, with their soils a mix of clay and limestone, and more than three quarters of the production of Bairrada is red wine. The principal grape of this region has always been the indigenous Baga grape, but in recent times, the wine authorities have allowed international grapes such as syrah, merlot and cabernet sauvignon, as well as Portuguese grapes from other regions, such as Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz to also emigrate into the region, altering the current wine landscape and perhaps threatening Bairrada's unique wine culture of the past. The Dão region is cut off from Bairrada to the west by the mountains of the Serra do Caramulo range, with the official limits of the DO also bordered to the southeast by another mountain range, the Serra da Estrela. These two mountain ranges help to define the warmer summers and cooler winters of the Dão region, with the vineyards generally planted on stony granitic soils that help to give the wines of both colors here sturdy structural chassis and the potential for very long lives in bottle. The predominant grape of Bairrada, Baga, is also grown in the Dão, but here it has long been supplemented by Touriga Nacional, Alfrocheiro and Mencia as well.

The Caves São João winery was originally established in 1920 by the Costa family with a goal of producing Port-styled wines, but in the late '20s the production of Porto was officially delimited to its current region and the estate turned its attention to producing non-fortified red and white wines from their home bases in Dão and Bairrada. The winery is based in the heart of the Bairrada region, but has always produced wines from both Bairrada and Dão. The winery has two additional labels it sells its wines under, as the Costa family created their Porta dos Cavaleiros label in the 1950s to augment their offerings of wines from the Dão, and their Frei João label at the same time for additional offerings from the Bairrada region. Happily, the tradition of holding wines back in the cellars here for many years, until they are mature, continues at Caves São João, and as market prices for older wines from more famous regions continue to skyrocket, the lovely, older wines from these two fine regions merit more attention from wine lovers without the flexible wine budgets of Cristiano Ronaldo or Lionel Messi. Caves São João and its sister labels have had long-standing agreements to purchase fruit from many small farmers in the two regions, as well as purchasing some wine from cooperatives in the two areas for blending into their bottlings. The wines are made from the indigenous grapes of the region, which include Baga, Touriga Nacional, Alfrocheiro and Mencia (amongst others) for the red wines and Arinto, Malvasia, Maria Gomes, Bical, Cercial and Rabo de Ovelha for the white wines. The wines of both colors from Caves São João are made in a very traditional style, with open top fermenters and extended aging of usually two years in cement tanks prior to bottling, with nary a new oak cask in sight. The young vintages are then left unmolested in the cellars for many years to blossom with bottle age (both reds and whites), so that the youngest current release that I tasted from any of these three labels for this report was the 1995 Poço do Lobo bottling under the Caves São João label- their youthful, twenty-one year-old red and white wines! Happily, the estate continues its practice of holding back its wines until they start to drink maturely and today it sits on more than a million bottles in their cellars! The wines are really very, very good and deserve more attention from lovers of mature, complex and soil-driven wines.

I should note that these bottles are all stored in the cellars on their original corks, so wines that are thirty or more years of age are going to often have fairly fragile corks. I have had far more success opening these wines with an Ah-So or Durand than a standard corkscrew (crumbly corks have in no way been an indication of the quality of the wine waiting

beneath the closure!), and wines of this age naturally also have a fair bit of sediment and should be properly stood up well in advance and decanted prior to serving. Just a bit of respect for these older wines can go a long way to maximizing their very serious enjoyment, and this is particularly important in this imperfect world.

2015 Dão Branco “Primus”- Quinta de Pellada

The Dão Branco bottling of “Primus” from Quinta de Pellada is made from an old field blend. The 2015 version is lovely, offering up a complex nose of fresh lime, tart pear, dried flowers, salty soil tones, a bit of wild fennel and a hint of raw almond in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with a good core, lovely soil signature and a long, bright and complex finish. This is drinking very well at age four, but still has plenty of life ahead of it.

2013 Dão “Casa”- Quinta de Pellada

The ancient Quinta de Pellada vineyard is planted to a field blend of the classical grapes of the northern Dão region. The adega has decided to bottle three examples from specific blocks of this vineyard, in addition to their blended bottling of Quinta de Pellada, with the “Casa” block the one that has the most sun hours and more clay in the granitic soil base. The primary varietals planted here are Alfrocheiro, Touriga Nacional and Baga, with small percentages of Tinta- Cão, Tinta-Pinheira and Jaen also co-planted here. The wine is raised in seven and eight year-old, French *foudres* for a bit more than two years prior to bottling. The 2013 Casa is outstanding, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, roasted meats, a fine base of stony soil tones, a bit of licorice, wood ash, chicory and hints of the autumnal elements to come. There is more than a passing resemblance to Barolo here! On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with great focus and grip, a superb signature of soil, firm, ripe and well-integrated tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is a terrific, old school bottle that is just starting to drink very well, but which is clearly still climbing in quality and will be even better with further bottle age. Outstanding juice! 2018-2050. **93+**.

2013 Dão “Reserva Estagio Prolongado”- Quinta des Saes

The Dão “Reserva Estagio Prolongado” from Quinta des Saes is made from a vineyard planted between 1957 and 1997, so some of these vines are not particularly old by the standards of the region. The soils are predominantly granite, with clay and sand interspersed and the wine is raised for eighteen months in two year-old barrels. The 2013 version is a nicely ripe wine, coming in at an even thirteen percent and offering up a complex bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, cola, stony soil tones, a bit of hung game, cola, licorice and just a whisper of spicy oak from the used barrels. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with excellent soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, well-balanced and very classy finish. This is an excellent wine that is approachable today, but is built to age and will be even better with further bottle age. A very, very impressive bottle of Dão. 2018-2050. **92+**.

1994 Cabernet Sauvignon- Quinta do Poço do Lobo (Bairrada)

The 1994 Cabernet Sauvignon from Quinta do Poço do Lobo is an excellent, old school example of this varietal that reminds me quite a bit of traditional St. Estèphe from back in the old days. The bouquet offers up a complex blend of dark berries, cigar ash, damp dark soil tones,

tobacco leaf, incipient notes of chipotle pepper and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a fine core, excellent complexity and grip, still moderate tannins and a long, well-balanced and claret-like finish. This is an excellent wine that is starting to drink quite well at age twenty-four, but still has room to grow with further bottle age. 2018-2045+. **92.**

1991 Arinto- Quinta do Poço do Lobo (Bairrada)

As I wrote about the 1995 version of this wine, this is a very unique wine in the extended lineup from Caves São João, as each of the three years the wine spends in cement tanks, a gentle flora forms in the tail end of the summer, before temperatures fall in the cellars and it dies off until next summer. After three years the wine is bottled, and then aged for many years in bottle prior to release, so the 1991 is just being let out from the cellars. The wine offers up a deep and complex bouquet of white cherries, orange peel, salty soil tones, roasted peach, a bit of browned butter and a topnote of raw almond. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still quite bright and bouncy, with excellent depth at the core, fine soil signature, fine focus and grip and a long, balanced and complex finish. This is a uniquely styled and quite high quality wine. 2018-2030. **91.**

1990 Bairrada “Reserva”- Caves São João

The 1990 Bairrada “Reserva” from Caves São João is one of the current releases from this excellent *négociant*, who continues to age their wines for many decades in their cellars before releasing them into the market. The wine’s *cépages* is a blend of twenty-five percent each of Baga, Alfrocheiro and Mencía, with the balance of the blend being twenty percent Tempranillo (Tinto Roriz here) and five percent Camarate. I last tasted this wine a couple of years ago and time seems not to have touched it at all, as it continues to drink at its apogee and offers up a deep and impressively complex nose of dark berries, cigar ash, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, hung game, a touch of eucalyptus, chicory and a lovely topnote of brown spices. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively soil-driven and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, still a bit of tannin on the backend, good acids and fine focus and balance on the long and very, very satisfying finish. This is a terrific wine that is at its apogee today, but still has plenty of life ahead. 2018-2040. **92.**

1989 Dão “Reserva Seleccionada”- Porta dos Cavaleiros (Caves São João)

The 1989 Dão “Reserva Seleccionada” from Porta dos Cavaleiros is made up of a blend of Touriga Nacional, Mencía, Alfrocheiro and Baga. The wine is deep and nicely earthy on the quite complex nose of black cherries, dark berries, roasted meats, cola, a bit of wild fennel, eucalyptus and a complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still a bit chewy in personality, with a superb core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and tangy finish. This is an excellent wine (and a great value!)- I should drink a hell of a lot more Dão! 2018-2040+. **93.**



Douro

2015 Xisto Cru Tinto- Luis Seabra Vinhos

Luis Seabra was the long-time winemaker for Niepoort, who decided a few years ago to strike out on his own. His Xisto Cru Tinto is made from a field blend of old vines, planted between 1910 and 1933. The two vineyards that he sources fruit from for this bottling lie at high elevations of six hundred and fifty to seven hundred meters above sea level, on mica schist soils and where there is a dramatic diurnal swing in temperatures during the growing season. As a reflection of this, though the days are torrid here, the 2015 Xisto Cru comes in at thirteen percent octane. The wine is fermented in Port *lagars* and raised in used French barrels for eleven months prior to bottling. The 2015 version offers up a deep and complex nose of black berries, cassis, a bit of road tar, hung game, balsam bough, stony soil tones and dried eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with a fair bit of ripe, well-integrated tannins, excellent soil signature, a fine core of fruit and lovely length and grip on the youthful and nascently complex finish. This will need some bottle age to properly blossom, but has plenty of potential and will be a very fine bottle in the fullness of time. Impressive juice! There is nothing slickly modern about this wine (which is something of a rarity for non-fortified Douro wines these days!) and this is a superb bottle that is firmly based in its *terroir* and indigenous field blend of grapes; it will age long and gracefully. A new and very impressive world to me! 2023-2060+. **93.**

2016 Xisto Cru Branco- Luis Seabra Vinhos

The 2016 Xisto Cru Branco from Luis Seabra is from the same section of Douro as his Tinto Xisto Cru, planted with old vines and from a field blend of grape varieties I have never encountered before, including Rabigato (seventy percent of the blend), Codega, Gouveio, and Viosinho Dozelino Branco. The wine is fermented in old *lagars* and aged in older French barrels, with no *battonage* and no malolactic fermentation. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up scents of pear, paraffin, lime peel, salty soil tones, spring flowers and a hint of vanillin oak from the older casks. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and vibrant finish. There is even a touch of backend tannin here from the skins of one of the varieties. This is simply an excellent wine, no matter how unfamiliar the grape varieties may be! 2018-2035. **93.**