

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

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- ❖ *Recently-Tasted Great, Old School, Mature(ish) Piemonte Wines (Sampling Vintages 1990 Back to 1961).* (pages 1-18)
- ❖ *The Timeless 1928 Bordeaux Vintage.* (pages 19 to 33)
- ❖ *The Brilliant 2012 Burgundy Vintage- Painfully Short Yields, But Dramatically Pure, Transparent and Sappy Wines of Both Colors.* (pages 34-179)

Coming Attractions

- ❖ *The Really Lovely, Vastly Underrated 2007 Red Burgundy Vintage- Already Drinking Very Well at Seven Years of Age.*
- ❖ *The Beautiful, Classic Rioja Cuvées of C.V.N.E.- Best Known as Cuné.*
- ❖ *Domaine Chandon de Briailles- Terroir Reigns Supreme in the Heart of Savigny.*
- ❖ *A Few More Utterly Superb Classical and Neo-Classical American Wines.*
- ❖ *Recently-Tasted Riesling: Maturing Wines and Those At Their Apogees.*
- ❖ *Domaine Henri Gouges- Traditionalism in Nuits St. Georges Shows Generational Change Proves That the More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same.*
- ❖ *Finally Unlocking the Timeless Mystery of Madeira.*
- ❖ *The 2010 and 2011 Vintages in Piemonte.*
- ❖ *Looking Below the Surface at the 1961 and 1959 Bordeaux Vintages.*
- ❖ *Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm- Middle Mosel Magnificence of the Highest Order.*
- ❖ *Sorting Out and Defining The Traditionalists In Bordeaux, Ric Forman, François Cotat's Great Sancerres, Château Cantemerle, Domaine Mongeard-Mugneret, Recently-Tasted Spanish Wines, The 1985 Clarets, Round Two of Kalin Cellars Magic, More Great 2012 Burgundies, Germany's 2013ers, Cathy Corison, Château Ausone and the 1998 Red Burgundy Vintage.*

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RECENTLY TASTED MATURE PIEMONTE GEMS THE 1990 VINTAGE BACK TO 1961



All these beautiful photos from Piemonte in this article are courtesy of John E. Morris. © 2011

I drink older Piemontese wines with some frequency these days, as these are some of my favorite wines and I just happen to have more older wines from this region still in my cellar than I do from other regions such as Burgundy and Bordeaux. Additionally, I happen to have some very generous friends whose Piemonte cellars are far deeper than mine who also like to share these wines, so I get to drink mature Barolo or Barbaresco about as often as I drink older wines from any other region in the world. I generally just keep the notes on file, particularly if they are wines from an estate that I have already fairly recently written an historical profile on in the newsletter, and often I tend to cross paths with wines from a producer I have just written a feature on. I do not know why this is the case, but it seems that once an historical piece is finished on an estate, my good luck sees me crossing paths with bottles from this same producer that I did not already have notes on and hence, did not appear in the article, as I had not recently tasted the wine in question. In these cases, I tend to just tuck the notes away for another article, rather than try to add them to the recently sent out piece. Given how often this has seemed to happen over the years, I am now fully preparing for fate to bring a spate of Burlotto wines my way in the coming few months that were not already reported on in the feature on this great estate! So notes of this sort pile up and from time to time I put together compilations such as this article to get the tasting notes out into the database.

In any event, this article would still just be a collection of disparate notes on older wines from the Langhe if it were not for the extraordinary tasting of older Ceretto wines that Jamie Wolff of Chambers Street Wines here in New York organized and was kind enough to invite me to participate in this past October. The wines had all been sourced from a superb cellar that Jamie located in Italy, with a great many of the wines for this tasting poured out of magnums. I had always liked Ceretto's wines back in the old days, but found that they had gone off in a more modern direction during the 1990s that was far less to my liking, but I had never had an opportunity to taste so many pristine examples of their top cru bottlings from the decade if the 1980s (as well as a couple of bottlings from the classic 1978 vintage) and I was extremely excited to have the opportunity to taste a wide range of these wines and get a much stronger sense of when modernism started to arrive in the Ceretto cellars. Given that there have been so many more modern wines made here since 1990, I never really considered writing a full-blown feature on the estate, as there is just not that much good news to report on after the close of the 1980s here, but all of these superb, older and (for the most part) quite classic wines from the Ceretto tasting served as the perfect cornerstone to put together this report on older Piemontese wines. After our superb tasting in October, I found myself really wishing that Ceretto had not embraced new French oak and whatever other changes they felt compelled to make to "improve their wines" at the end of the 1980s and on into the 1990s, as they were really making some excellent wines prior to "modernizing" their style.

From our tasting, it seems pretty clear that the modern era at Ceretto really began to be felt here in the 1989 vintage, though not uniformly across the board. Prior to 1989, there may have been just a bit of new wood being introduced into the cellars here, as a few of the 1985s showed a gentle touch of cedar to their aromatic profiles and which would suggest that a few newer *barriques* were being put to use in the cellars here at Ceretto. Interestingly, the couple of 1988 Baroli that we tasted (Brunate and Prapó) did not show this discreet cedary element, which I would surmise to show that no new barrels were introduced into the cellar for this vintage (perhaps owing to the style of the 1988s versus the 1985s?), but there was definitely a more overtly new oaky component in evidence in a couple of the '89s in our lineup. Interestingly, the 1989 Barolo "Prapó" did not show any signs of new wood in its bouquet or flavor profile, but both the '89 Barolo "Bricco Rocche" and Barbaresco "Asili" did show a fair bit of new wood, with the new oak far more toasty in nature (as was the style of new wood in the late 1980s and early years of the 1990s), rather than the more gentle notes of cedar found in far less intensity in the 1985s. However, I should note that the 1989 Asili and Bricco Rocche were still very good wines and not what one would really term "modern" in style, but more classically-styled wines with some overt, toasty new oak tossed in on top. I have not had a lot of Ceretto wines from the decade of the 1990s (and most of those were years and years ago), but I recall that the wines became much more overtly modern in style in the decade of the 1990s, and I lost track of them as we each marched down our own distinct Piemontese paths as the years went by.

Of the notes that follow, all of the Ceretto wines were tasted at the October 2013 tasting organized by Jamie Wolff of Chambers Street Wines, with the exception of the 1982 Barolo "Brunate", which I had tasted prior to this recent tasting. The remainder of the wines listed below have all been tasted in the last year or two and are mostly not reported upon in previous articles on the estates from which they hail, or the recent note is sufficiently removed from the prior note on the wine in the domaine's historical feature as to be a useful update into the state

of maturity on the wine in question. The only producer whose older wines I drink with just a bit of regularity (but hardly often enough!) and who is not represented in the following lineup of wines is Bruno Giacosa, as I am currently at work on a second feature on the grand old man of Piemonte and hope to complete that in the coming year. The notes are listed chronologically from younger to older (the way a vastly prefer to drink my Piemontese wines at vertical tastings!), and then listed with the Barbaresci first and Baroli secondly within each vintage section, and alphabetically by producer.

1990 Barbaresco “Casotto”- Giuseppe Nada

This is the only wine I have ever had the pleasure to taste from Giuseppe Nada, who is based in the village of Treiso, which is best known to me as the home of the fine and very classical producer, Cantina Rizzi. The 1990 Casotto from the Nada family is a very good example of the vintage, offering up a blossomed bouquet of black cherries, licorice, bonfires, a touch of game, road tar and camphor. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and already showing plenty of tertiary complexity, with a good core, modest tannins and fine length and grip on the tangy finish. This is not in the top division of Barbaresco producers, but it is a very good, honest bottle of wine that is drinking at its peak, but still has plenty of life ahead of it. 2010-2025+. **89.**

1990 Barbaresco “Montestefano”- Prunotto

I remember very well how nice the 1985 Prunotto wines were after Antinori first purchased the property, but I had not followed them up in previous vintages and had no idea what the 1990 Montestefano was going to be like prior to be served this wine double blind recently. It seems very clear that it did not take the Antinori team long to make a mess of these wines with new wood once they really sunk their teeth into the property. The '90 Montestefano is really a flawed wine in terms of balance, as its new oak is abrasive on the nose and totally drying on the palate- not that the underlying wine is great shakes in any case. The wide open, ripe and tarry nose is a mix of dark berries, road tar, coffee grounds, muddy soil tones and toasty new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, dense and chewy, with withering wood tannins totally dominating the astringent and over-extracted finish. This is a dull, dumb and over-oaked Barbaresco that will only continue to dry out more with further bottle age. Drink up or (better yet) put it in the marinade. **77** (and falling fast).

1990 Barbaresco “Pajé” Riserva- Roagna

The 1990 Barbaresco “Pajé” Riserva from Roagna is a very nicely evolved example of the vintage, offering up a deep and classy aromatic constellation of black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, nutskins, fresh herbs, forest floor, road tar and just a touch of barnyard. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tarry and still fairly chewy, with lovely complexity and mid-palate depth, a soil-driven personality and very good length and grip on the old school, moderately tannic finish. This is still a few years away from fully blossoming, as it is done in the very traditional style of Roagna in this period, but there is a lot to like here and this will be a lovely wine for a very long time still. 2016-2040. **91.**

1990 Barolo “Rocche”- Brovia

I really like the broad-shouldered style of Brovia’s wines, though I do not drink them with any regularity. Brovia’s parcel of vines is in the Rocche di Castiglione that sits overlooking the Rio di Perno from the crown of its cliffs in Castiglione Falletto, rather than in one of the other Rocche variations to be found in the region, such as Rocche dell’Annunziata or Bricco Rocche. The 1990 Rocche is really a fine, fine example of the vintage, offering up a deep and

pure nose of cherries, road tar, camphor, forest floor, fennel seed and a nice touch of orange zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a rock solid core, tangy acids, moderate tannins and very good length and grip on the focused and well-balanced finish. This is not a particularly “roasted” example of the 1990 vintage and the wine is just starting to drink well, but it clearly still has decades ahead of it and may continue to improve with further bottle age. Good juice. 2012-2030+. **92+**.

1990 Barolo “Vigna Cicala”- Aldo Conterno

I miss the old style of the Aldo Conterno wines, as bottles such as this lovely 1990 Vigna Cicala really show what has been lost here as so much new wood has been added to the equation by Aldo’s sons. The ’90 Vigna Cicala offers up a beautiful nose of red and black cherries, meaty tones, bonfires, *sous bois*, licorice and road tar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and still fairly structured, with a great core of fruit, tangy acids, ripe, moderate and well-integrated tannins and superb length and grip on the focused and very complex finish. This is just starting to edge towards its plateau of maturity, but really could still do with a few more years bottle age to really blossom completely. It is one of the freshest and most interesting 1990 Baroli I have tasted in several years and really shows that back in this day and age, this was one of the finest estates in all of Piemonte. 2013-2050. **94**.

1990 Barolo- Bartolo Mascarello

It had been four and a half years since I had last crossed paths with the 1990 Bartolo Barolo, and the wine was showing very well on this most recent showing, though perhaps a bit deeper-pitched than it had been back in 2007 and showing just a bit more of the style of the vintage than the previous bottle. The bouquet is deep and quite black fruity this time around, offering up scents of black cherries, roasted game, celery seed, road tar, bonfires, autumnal soil tones and a nice topnote of nutskin. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and quite autumnal, with a far gamier personality than the last bottle I tasted, with moderate tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. Perhaps this is just a phase the wine is going through in its evolution, but I get the feeling that the less than stellar attributes of the 1990 vintage may be beginning to throw their weight around with this wine. 2012-2030+. **91+?**

1990 Barolo “Monprivato”- Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio

I clearly underrated the 1990 Monprivato a bit the last time I tasted it, as it was served alongside the magical 1989, and I did not pay enough attention to just how good the 1990 was by its side. Happily, this most recent bottle was served on its own and there was no need to compare and contrast, just savor this excellent example of the ’90 vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and really showing superb, secondary layers of complexity in its mélange of cherries, orange rind, camphor, forest floor, coffee, fresh herb tones and a lovely, complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really starting to drink well, with a lovely core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and well-balanced finish. A lovely example of the 1990 vintage. 2014-2040. **93**.

1989 Barbaresco “Bricco Asili”- Ceretto (served from magnum)

Given how stellar the 1978 Ceretto Asili showed at our tasting (please see below), I had very high expectations for the 1989 Asili magnum, but this wine shows some overtly new oak tones of wood char that detract a fair bit from what is really a superb wine underneath the wood. The bouquet is a mix of cherries, orange peel, gamebirds, a lovely and quite complex base of soil, mustard seed and toasty, spicy new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and a bit pinched in the mid-palate by the *barriques*, with very good focus, length and

grip, but just a bit of uncovered oak tannins adding a slightly astringent edge to the backend. This wine is brighter underneath its new wood than the 1989 Ceretto Bricco Rocche, but at the same time, it has not quite assimilated its oak tannins to the same degree, and I could see the wood here always sticking out a bit on the backend. If the wood eventually gets fully absorbed, then this should end up superior to the '89 Bricco Rocche, but of the three 1989 Ceretto wines that I tasted for this report, the seemingly unadulterated Prapó is the best of the lot. 2020-2045+? **89+?**

1989 Barbaresco “Montestefano”- Prunotto

The 1989 Montestefano is quite a bit better than the 1990, as it is nowhere near as extracted in personality and the new French oak is far better handled than in the dying 1990 rendition. This is not a great Barbaresco, but it is still pretty young and has some redeeming qualities on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is a youthful blend of dark berries, road tar, herb tones, hints of the camphor to come with further bottle age, woodsmoke and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite tight and primary, with good focus and balance, still some firm tannins to resolve and perfectly respectable length on the chewy finish. Give this another two or three years to more fully blossom- it will probably always be a bit defined by its rather heavy winemaking hand, but it is not too bad and a significant step up from the 1990 version. 2016-2035. **87+?**

1989 Barolo “Bricco Rocche”- Ceretto

I have a pretty strong preference for the more classic 1985 Bricco Rocche from Ceretto over its 1989 counterpart (despite 1989 being the far superior vintage), due to the new, toasty oak influence in this wine. The new wood is not really overdone here, just intrusive to my palate, as the bouquet is a mix of black cherries, road tar, camphor, gamebirds and a bit of torrefaction from the quite toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite a bit deeper-pitched (almost dulled) from its new wood influence, with a rock solid core, firm tannins and a long, tarry finish. This is not bad wine *per se*, but it could have been so much more without the toasty new oak. 2020-2050. **89.**

1989 Barolo “Prapó”- Ceretto (served from magnum)

The Prapó vineyard is located in the village of Serralunga d'Alba, in the northern section of the municipality, with an average altitude of 350 meters above sea level, and with an exposition that ranges from due east to southeasterly and due south as one moves along the hillside. The vineyard is also known as Pra di Pó, of which Prapó seems to be a contraction. It tends to produce classic, long-lived Serralunga Barolo, and while it is not the most distinguished of the crus cultivated by the Ceretto family, it makes very good wines and I have liked a great many Ceretto examples I have tasted from Prapó. The 1989 seems to have been a bit forgotten in the cellar when the new *barriques* were passed out, and this is all to the good! The bouquet is deep, youthfully sappy and very promising, as it wafts from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, licorice, incipient tariness, a lovely signature of soil, developing notes of gamebirds and nutskin, fresh herbs and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and quite complete, with a sappy core, ripe, well-integrated tannins and superb length and grip on the pure and powerful finish. The nascent complexity here is excellent, and this has a purity and backend energy that is very promising indeed, but in magnum, it is still a few years away from primetime. 2018-2060. **93+.**

1989 Barolo “Monprivato”- Giuseppe Mascarello y Figli

It had been a few years since I last crossed paths with a bottle of the '89 Monprivato and the wine is aging at a very relaxed and graceful pace. As readers may recall from the article I

wrote on the domaine back in 2008, the 1989 Monprivato from the Mascarello family is an absolute monument to this great vintage. The beautiful nose offers up a gloriously blossoming blend of cherries, strawberries, rose petals, a superbly complex base of soil, fresh oregano, a touch of mustard seed, nutskins and underbrush. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully transparent, with an outstanding core of fruit, still plenty of ripe tannins, impeccable focus and balance and a very long, tangy and building finish that is starting to show the first signs of blossoming in the not too distant future. This is still really a bit too young to be pulling corks on with wild abandon, but it is showing all of its considerable potential today and is really not too bad of a drink with proper decanting time. It is a legendary vintage of Monprivato and will age for another forty years or more, so obviously, there is no rush to start drinking this great wine today. 2016-2060+. **95.**



Mauro Mascarello and his son Giuseppe, offering samples to visitors at the winery. (John E. Morris © 2011)

1989 Barolo- Giuseppe Rinaldi

I love the wines of Giuseppe Rinaldi and hope one day to have the opportunity to write a full feature on the estate and its superb Baroli. The 1989 Barolo *Normale* is an excellent and very youthful example of this outstanding year, offering up a deep, complex and very pure nose of red and black cherries, new leather, gentle tarry overtones, incipient notes of gamebird, fresh oregano, a lovely base of soil and a smoky topnote redolent of bonfires. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with its structural elements just beginning to stir and the wine to open up to reveal outstanding mid-palate depth, ripe, well-integrated

tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very, very long, young and very well-balanced finish. This was still a puppy when I last tasted it on New Year's Eve of 2010, and I imagine it is still a few years away from really starting to drink with serious generosity. It will be a superb bottle in its prime and should last for decades and decades. 2016-2050. **93+**.

1988 Barolo "Brunate"- Ceretto (served from magnum)

The 1988 Ceretto Brunate magnum is more precise and refined than the mag of '88 Prapó, and it is an equally superb example of this underrated vintage. The nose is a very classic and red fruity aromatic constellation of cherries, blood orange, licorice, fresh herb tones, a refined base of soil, nutskin and a touch of cigar smoke in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully focused, with an excellent core of fruit, outstanding transparency, modest tannins and excellent length and grip on the very soil-driven and complex finish. A really lovely bottle of Barolo that is entering its long plateau of peak drinkability. 2013-2040. **94**.

1988 Barolo "Prapó"- Ceretto (served from magnum)

The magnum of 1988 Barolo "Prapó" from Ceretto was even a hair superior to the very good 1985 served at the same tasting, as the '88 possesses just a bit more inner core and greater depth. This is really a lovely example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, licorice, woodsmoke, gentle tariness, oregano and a lovely and quite complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very well-balanced, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and tangy finish. This is really a lovely wine, and even in magnum, it is now entering its apogee of peak maturity and is drinking beautifully. Fine juice. 2013-2035. **93**.

1988 Barolo "Cascina Francia"- Giacomo Conterno

I had not tasted a bottle of the superb '88 Cascina Francia from the Conterno family in a few years, and it is always a pleasure to revisit wines from this great estate and see how they are evolving. Not surprisingly, this wine is progressing at a snail's pace and seems not to have moved a whole lot along its evolutionary curve in the three or four years that have passed since I last crossed paths with a bottle. The bouquet is simply beautiful, offering up a very pure and refined mélange of black cherries, cassis, road tar, a touch of red curry, bonfires, forest floor, fresh oregano and blossoming notes of porcini. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and marvelously complex, with superb focus and grip, moderate, chewy tannins and excellent length on the poised and very well-balanced finish. This is a more black fruity vintage of Cascina Francia than for example, 1985 or 1989, but it shows all of the complexity and breed for which this cru is rightly famous. A really lovely bottle that is not a bad drink today, but still quite obviously climbing in quality. 2012-2040. **93+**.

1988 Barolo "Sperrs"- Angelo Gaja

This was the first vintage of Barolo produced by Angelo Gaja and it has always been one of my favorite wines from the estate in the fine run of vintages produced here in the 1980s. The follow-up vintage of Sperrs was much riper and oakier than this lovely 1988, and not in the same league in terms of class or complexity to my palate as a result of their more modern personalities. But, the 1988 Sperrs, now this is an utterly superb bottle of Barolo, which wafts from the glass in a complex and refined blend of black cherries, licorice, tar, incipient notes of camphor, woodsmoke and a fine, classy base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and really starting to drink well and come into its own, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, moderate tannins, very good acidity and outstanding focus and balance on the long and

classic finish. It is a pity to my palate that the style of the Gaja Baroli eventually moved away from this really very lovely and beautifully elegant 1988 Sperrs. 2010-2035. **93.**

1988 Barolo-Bartolo Mascarello

I very much like the 1988 Bartolo Mascarello Barolo, but this is one of the most black fruity vintages of his wine that I have ever tasted, as I usually find the Mascarello wines to be quite red fruity in character at this stage of their evolutions. However, this is just an observation about the 1988, not a criticism, as this wine has all of the breed and complexity one has come to expect from the wines that *Signor* Mascarello produced over his long career. The bouquet is a beautiful and maturing mélange of black cherries, dark berries, dried roses, *sous bois*, a touch of curry, gentle notes of venison, road tar and even a bit of coffee bean in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and showing tons of *porcini* (which was not all that apparent on the nose!), with a lovely core, beautiful focus and balance, melting tannins and very fine length and grip on the finish. Perhaps this will get more red fruity with further cellaring. Lovely juice. 2012-2040. **92.**

1987 Barolo Riserva Monfortino- Giacomo Conterno

I wish I had bought more bottles of the 1987 Monfortino back in the old days, as this was a very reasonably priced wine at one time and the quality is excellent. As I noted way back in 2008 on the feature on the Conterno family's wines, Giovanni Conterno was able to pick his fruit in Cascina Francia prior to the autumn rains in 1987, which is why there was a Monfortino produced in this vintage. The wine is outstanding, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, black cherries, licorice, road tar, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, bonfires and incipient notes of balsamic vinegar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and focused, with a rock solid core, modest tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. A lovely wine. 2012-2030+. **92.**

1985 Barbaresco "Faset"- Ceretto (served from magnum)

The cru of Faset is not one that I am very familiar with, but it lies in the village of Barbaresco on the large ridge that cuts through the center of the municipality and includes also Pora (its immediate neighbor to the south) and Pagliuzzi a bit further to the west. To the east of this section of the ridge lie the great hills of Asili, Martinenga and Rabajà, and at its eastern extreme, Faset shares a border with Asili. According to the Slow Food atlas of Piemonte, the vineyard has a shifting exposition, from southeast over towards Pagliuzzi on the western end, due south to southwest in the central part of the hill, and again, shifting over towards a southeasterly exposition near the Asili border. The magnum of the 1985 Faset from Ceretto was a very nice bottle that was starting to drink very well, with a slightly rustic aspect to it, but plenty of personality. The bouquet is a blend of cherries, red curry, bonfires, gamebirds, a nice touch of nutskin, *sous bois* and just a whisper of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still a bit chewy, with a good core of fruit, sound acids, good focus and very fine length and grip on the old school, slightly rustic finish. Good, honest Barbaresco that still has years to go in magnum. 2013-2040. **90+.**

1985 Barbaresco "Rabajà"- Prunotto

If memory serves me correctly, 1985 was the first Antinori vintage for Prunotto, and the wines were really quite good. The '85 Rabajà is a good solid effort for the vintage, and while it does not really do complete justice to the this magical *terroir*, there is a lot to like here. The bouquet is a bit tarry, but offers up scents of cassis, black cherries, a nice dollop of fennel seed,

dark soil tones and a bit of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core of fruit, a bit of backend tannin (some of it oak-derived) and good length and grip on the focused and still slightly chewy finish. The new wood here pinches this wine just a bit in the mid-palate, and clearly is not a positive addition, but it is pretty well done and not particularly obtrusive. Good, solid juice that should continue to drink fairly well for another dozen years or so. 2010-2025. **89.**

1985 Barolo “Bricco Rocche”- Ceretto

The 1985 Bricco Rocche from Ceretto is an excellent wine and is drinking very well indeed out of normal-sized format. The deep, complex and very classic nose offers up scents of cherries, orange peel, woodsmoke, a bit of roasted squab, fresh oregano, nutskin, a lovely and quite complex base of soil and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still nicely structured, with a nice base of modest tannin, lovely focus and mid-palate depth, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long, complex and classy finish. This is really a lovely bottle of blossoming Barolo, with just a touch of French wood showing up as cedar on the nose, but no signs of any other cellar treatments that would push it out of the “old school” camp. Fine juice with decades of life still ahead of it. 2013-2035+. **92+.**

1985 Barolo “Brunate”- Ceretto (served from magnum)

Our magnum of 1985 Ceretto was corked, which was a shame, as this was clearly the finest of the four 1985s we had at our Chambers Street tasting in October. The wine started out very slightly corked, but the TCA taint built with air and made it impossible to score the wine, but I would bet that good examples of this wine easily would rate a 94 or so. The wine is a fine aromatic blend of red and black cherries, road tar, camphor, fresh herbs and woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a still fairly youthful profile, a rock solid core of fruit, firm, well-integrated tannins and outstanding length and grip. Good magnums of this would still be a bit on the young side, but I suspect that this wine is just gorgeous right now out of regular bottles.

1985 Barolo “Prapó”- Ceretto (served from magnum)

The magnum of 1985 Barolo “Prapó” from Ceretto is a lovely example of the vintage, with the wine showing very good evolution at the moment and it is eminently drinkable today with sufficient air, though there remains a good chassis of tannin and the wine is still probably four or five years away from really reaching its plateau of peak maturity (at least in magnum). The deep and very classy nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, camphor, gamebirds, mustard seed, oregano, forest floor and gentle notes of tariness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and already quite suave on the attack, with a fine core, a fair bit of ripe tannin and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced and blossoming finish. I would keep mags of this wine still tucked away for another four or five years, but in normal-sized bottles, it is probably really starting to drink well- though certainly with plenty of life still ahead of it. Good juice. 2018-2040+. **92.**

1985 Barolo-Bartolo Mascarello

While I still have a handful of bottles of the '85 Bartolo Mascarello in my cellar, I am certainly trying to be good and not open them with any frequency today, as this wine remains young and will be a far more profound glass of Barolo a decade from now than it is today- and it is a pretty damn good glass of wine right now! I love the refined perfume of this wine, which wafts from the glass in a very lovely bouquet of red and black cherries, camphor, autumnal soil tones, licorice, gamebirds and a very gentle base of tariness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and really shows off the refinement of the Cannubi element in its blend, with a great

core of sappy fruit, extremely fine-grained, but still fairly substantial tannins, lovely acidity and stunning focus and grip on the very, very long and perfectly balanced finish. A great, great example of the vintage and an utterly classic Bartolo! 2013-2040+. **95.**



1982 Barbaresco “Sori Tildin”- Gaja

The 1982 Sori Tildin remains one of my absolute favorite wines from the career of Angelo Gaja, as in this vintage I have always found what to me is the perfect blend of traditionalism with a modern touch and flair. This was my last bottle of this great wine, which was from a lot of what were the very first Gaja wines I ever bought for my nascent collection way back in the day. The wine is now at its apogee and drinking splendidly well, soaring from the glass in a deep, pure and magical blend of black cherries, licorice, blossoming autumnal notes, a bit of nutskin, gamebird, fresh herbs, road tar and just a whisper of wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and classy, with superb depth, great focus and balance, moderate tannins and great length and grip on the very complex and perfectly delineated finish. Just a great wine. 2010-2030. **95.**

1982 Barbaresco “Marcarini”- Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio

The 1982 Barbaresco “Marcarini” was made from purchased fruit by Mauro Mascarello, with the Marcarini vineyard lying in the village of Treiso. This is the only vintage of this rare wine that I have ever had the pleasure to taste and do not know how long this was produced by the Mascarello family. The very complex bouquet is really quite stunning, jumping from the

glass in a red fruity blend of cherries, cigar smoke, orange zest, aged leather, fresh herb tones, forest floor, tar, anise and lovely minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, transparent and tangy, with a lovely core, still a bit of tannin and outstanding length and grip on the bright and soil-driven finish. Just a lovely bottle of Barbaresco that has reached its apogee, but has decades of life still ahead of it. 2010-2030. **93.**

1982 Barbaresco “Crichet Pajé”- Roagna

Crichet Pajé is the very crown of the Pajé vineyard in Barbaresco, and the Roagna family today has seventy year-old vines planted in this section, which they bottle on their own. The vines would have been in their forties back in 1982, and the wine is a very nice, mature and slightly rustic bottle of old Barbaresco. The lovely and fully blossomed nose offers up scents of black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, road tar, damp earth and a topnote of dried herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tarry in personality, with a bit of old school tannin still perking up the backend, a good core and very good length and grip on the complex and sturdy finish. Today, Roagna makes far more polished wines (though still very much in the old school) than was the case back here in 1982, but this is still a very good bottle of Barbaresco in its old world style and has plenty of life still ahead of it. Good juice. 2013-2030. **90.**

1982 Barolo “Rocche”- Brovia

I have a very slight preference for the 1982 Rocche *Normale* bottling from Brovia over its Riserva version, as this is actually a touch darker in color and shows a bit more mid-palate stuffing as a result of its shorter sojourn in *botti* prior to bottling. The bouquet is superb, offering up scents of black cherries, meaty tones, coffee, a very strong base of soil, a bit of nutskin and incipient autumnal notes starting to inform the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still fairly youthful in profile, with a great core of fruit, excellent focus and balance, ripe, well-integrated tannins and outstanding length and grip. This is very high class juice and still a relative puppy! 2013-2040. **93.**

1982 Barolo “Rocche” Riserva- Brovia

The 1982 Brovia Rocche Riserva is quite a bit lighter in color than its *Normale* counterpart and is showing far more tertiary elements on both the nose and palate. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex mélange of cherries, orange zest, fallen leaves, truffles, camphor, tar and dried roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and more evolved than the *Normale*, with a good core, modest tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus on the long and complex finish. This is a lovely bottle that is already drinking at its apogee, and though it will have no difficulties cruising along for many years to come, I do not envision it ever quite catching the lovey '82 Rocche *Normale* bottling, and it will probably not be quite as long-lived. But, it is really splitting hairs here to choose one over the other, as they are both outstanding wines! 2009-2030+. **92+.**

1982 Barolo “Brunate”- Ceretto

The 1982 Brunate from Ceretto is a beautiful example of this vintage and the old school, classical style that prevailed here back in the 1980s for the top wines produced at the estate. The deep and complex nose offers up a lovely constellation of cherries, licorice, road tar, woodsmoke, a touch of celery seed, forest floor, almond skin and a bit of Christmas Tree spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex in a nicely old-fashioned style, with a good core, still a bit of chewy tannin to resolve and fine length and grip on the well-balanced and *à point* finish. A very fine bottle that was tasted in Germany a couple of years ago, rather than at our Ceretto vertical here in New York this past October. 2011-2035. **93.**

1982 Barolo-Bartolo Mascarello

I cannot believe it is over five years since I last posted a note on the glorious 1982 Bartolo Mascarello Barolo, as I have certainly drunk a few bottles over this period of time! This remains one of my favorite Bartolos and one of my favorite 1982s as well, but the wine is still fairly early on in its evolutionary arc and it will continue to improve with further bottle age. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a very pure and sappy blend of red cherries, woodsmoke, orange zest, roses, incipient notes of nutskin, a touch of pomegranate, fresh herbs and a very deep, complex and refined base of minerally soil nuances. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very refined, with a rock solid core of pure fruit, great purity and focus, moderate, well-integrated tannins and stunning length and grip on the complex and totally soil-driven finish. This is simply a brilliant bottle of 1982 Barolo that I am tempted to open every time I see a bottle in the cellar, as it is so good to drink today, but it is still clearly climbing in quality and further self-restraint will be very richly rewarded! 2012-2050. **95+**.

1982 Barolo “Monprivato”- Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio

It has been quite a few years since I wrote up my history on the great wines of Mauro and Giuseppe Mascarello, and I was very happy to cross paths with a brilliantly beautiful bottle of their 1982 Monprivato recently. This wine showed so well that it is very clear that I underrated it in my 2008 feature on the family. The bouquet is very deep, pure and flat out stunning in its mélange of sappy red and black cherries, Cuban cigars, a very intense topnote of rose petals, camphor, nutskin and a gently complex base of autumnal soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and wonderfully suave on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced and complex finish. This is one of the finest 1982s I have tasted in quite some time and I regret not scoring it sufficiently high enough back in my feature on the estate! It is a great glass of wine already with sufficient time in decanter, but it is still climbing and is probably a few years away from really reaching its plateau of maturity. 2017-2060. **95+**.

1982 Barolo- Filippo Sobrero e Figlio

This was the first bottle of Barolo I had ever tasted from Filippo Sobrero e Figlio, and the person who brought it from the tasting said that they had traded a bottle with Robert Parker to get this wine. The estate was based in Castiglione Falletto back in the day, and the 1982 offers up a deep and somewhat rustic mix of hung game, dried fruit, woodsmoke, a gentle base of road tar, balsamic overtones and *sous bois*. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit four-square, with a good core, melting tannins and perfectly sound focus, length and grip on the modestly chewy, old-fashioned finish. This is not a bad bottle, but clearly Sobrero was not in the top division in 1982. 2010-2030. **88**.

1979 Barbaresco “Costa Russi”- Gaja

The 1979 Gaja Costa Russi is really a lovely bottle of fully mature Barbaresco, with lovely, tertiary layers of autumnal complexity still nicely balanced by fresh fruit and lovely structure. The deep, complex and very classy nose offers up a blend of cherries, coffee, forest floor, orange peel, a nice touch of *porcini*, roasted gamebirds and a beautiful, gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and perfectly resolved, with a nice core of fruit, superb soil signature, melting tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and very classy finish. Fine juice. 2011-2025+. **92**.



The snow-covered Barbaresco vineyards in the village of Treiso, with the Alps in the background. (John Morris)

1979 Barbaresco “Ovello”- Produttori del Barbaresco

The 1979 Produttori Ovello is a beautiful example of this fully mature and really quite underrated vintage in Piemonte. The deep, complex and tertiary nose wafts from the glass in a mix of cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, nutskins, a touch of graphite, *sous bois* and a smoky topnote redolent of bonfires in the distance. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and fully mature, with lovely focus, length and grip, melting tannins, lovely, bright acids and excellent complexity and breed. This is not my very favorite cru from the Produttori, but this is a really fine bottle of fully-resolved Barbaresco at its apogee and with plenty of life still in it. 2011-2025+. **91.**

1979 Barolo- Elvio Cogno

I am not really sure of the origin of this wine, as in this era at Marcarini (where Elvio Cogno was still the esteemed winemaker), a small part of the production at Marcarini went directly to *Signor Cogno* to be sold under his label (though still with the same style of striking gold label as found on the bottles labeled as Marcarini). Whether the '79 vintage was deemed of a quality level to declassify some of the Brunate or La Serra into a straight Barolo I am not sure, or if this was produced from parcels outside of the two flagship crus of the Marcarini family, as this is the first wine from the '79 vintage I have tasted from the Marcarini stable. The cork on this solitary bottle I rescued from auction was a bit crumbly, so it was probably not quite a perfect bottle- though still eminently drinkable. The bouquet is deep, complex and tertiary in its

autumnal splendor, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, chestnuts, a dollop of remaining road tar, forest floor, fennel seed, a bit of gamebird and a gentle topnote of camphor. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, velvety and showing just a touch of mid-palate oxidation (probably as a result of the crumbly cork), but with lovely sweetness at the core, fine complexity and focus and a long, meltingly tannic and nicely balanced finish. I am sure that bottles with better corks are still drinking at their apogees, but I had no difficulties finishing this lovely wine even in its slightly diminished state. Like many cuspy bottles of old Barolo, with each subsequent pour from the decanter, the wine seems more oxidative, and then as it sits in the glass, this element diminishes as the aromatic profile of the wine has a chance to better emerge. Please expect pristine bottles to score three to four points higher. 2013-2018+? **87+?**

1978 Barbaresco “Asili”- Ceretto

The 1978 Asili from Ceretto is really a beautiful, beautiful example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a refined and complex aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, licorice, a nice touch of spiced meats, forest floor, red curry, cigar smoke and a touch of sandalwood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and absolutely *à point*, with a superb core of fruit, moderate tannins, tangy acids and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. This is one of my favorite Ceretto wines I have ever had the pleasure to taste- not that it is a huge step up from many other of these fine old Cerettos covered in this report- but, I simply love the style and vibrancy found in the '78 Asili. 2013-2040. **94.**

1978 Barolo Riserva- Borgogno

The 1978 Barolo Riserva from Borgogno is a very good wine, but it is just a touch astringent on the backend and seems to me that it was probably just a tad too long in *botti* prior to bottling. The bouquet is deep, complex and tertiary in its mix of baked cherries, woodsmoke, a touch of nutskin, lovely, autumnal soil tones, dried herbs and a touch of menthol in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and slightly dry-edged, with a good core, fine complexity and very good length and grip on the autumnal finish. This is a good, solid example of Barolo, but it is not particularly long on elegance and is not in the top division in this vintage. 2011-2030. **87.**

1978 Barolo “Prapó”- Ceretto

The 1978 Barolo “Prapó” from Ceretto is not as refined as their superb '78 Asili, but there is a noble rusticity here that is very attractive, and the wine is every bit as well made and classic in style as the Asili, it simply does not hail from such a superb *terroir*. The bouquet offers up a mature and complex nose of red cherries, autumnal soil tones, beef bouillon, game, licorice and a gentle dollop of tariness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and broad-shouldered, with a good core, sound acids and still a bit of old school, chewy tannin perking up the long and well-balanced finish. This is a very good bottle of mature Barolo that is drinking at its peak- despite it still retaining some tannin (which I think will always be part of its palate profile)- that should continue to cruise along nicely for the next fifteen to twenty years, but I cannot envision it getting better with more bottle age and it is time to enjoy this wine at its plateau of maturity. Very good juice. 2013-2030+. **89.**

1978 Barolo- Oddero

I really like the old Oddero Baroli, as I have long found this estate to be one of the most underrated sources for classic, old school wines. This bottle of 1978 hails from a small cache of the wine that I purchased in Italy a few years ago and stored at a friend's cellar in Germany- so that I could have a few bottles to open when visiting and reciprocate a bit for his extraordinary

generosity. The wine is really a lovely example of the '78 vintage, offering up a lovely, old school bouquet of black cherries, camphor, licorice, *sous bois*, melted tar, woodsmoke and a bit of roasted game in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure with aeration, with fine focus and mid-palate concentration, still a bit of chewy tannin and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced and classic finish. Really a lovely wine from the school of noble rusticity in Barolo. 2011-2030. **92.**

1974 Barolo “Rocche”- Brovia

1974 is generally an overlooked vintage in Piemonte these days, but it was rightly popular in its early days and the wines have aged very well indeed and currently offer outstanding drinking. The 1974 Rocche from Brovia is a lovely bottle of fully mature Barolo, offering up a classy bouquet of dried cherries, red curry, fennel, woodsmoke, *sous bois* and camphor. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and beautifully transparent, with still a nice core of fruit, excellent soil signature, melting tannins, well-integrated acids and lovely length and grip on the complex and classy finish. Fine juice. 2009-2020. **90.**

1974 Barolo- Oddero

Here is another excellent old Oddero Barolo, with lovely focus and resolution in evidence on both the nose and palate and a sophisticated palate impression that is the epitome of mature Barolo. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a perfectly *à point* mélange of cherries, orange rind, *sous bois*, a touch of fresh rosemary, camphor, gentle tariness and an autumnally smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and intensely flavored, with a sweet core of fruit, tangy acids, melting tannins and lovely length and grip on the complex and very classy finish. Lovely juice at its zenith from this very fine and dramatically underrated estate. 2010-2025. **92.**

1971 Barolo Riserva- Giacomo Conterno

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-Bartolo Mascarello

It had been more than four years since I had last crossed paths with the brilliant 1971 Barolo from Bartolo Mascarello, and this most recent bottle was really a gorgeous bottle of wine at its absolute apogee of peak drinkability. The stunningly pure and refined nose shows off an awful lot of its Cannubi origins in its red fruity blend of sappy cherries, gamebirds, orange zest, a delicate base of road tar, forest floor, coffee, fresh oregano and a gloriously floral topnote redolent of a gardenful of roses. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with stunning transparency, modest tannins, tangy acids and absolutely flawless focus and balance on the very long, complex and magical finish. This is a great vintage from this Barolo

Master and it has a long, long life still ahead of it, keeping beautifully poignant the great life lived of this very fine *Piemontese* humanist. 2011-2045+. **96+**.

1971 Barolo (Francesco Rinaldi)- Bottled by Osvaldo Berrasoni

Signor Berrasoni did a very nice job of bottling his demi-johns of Francesco Rinaldi's 1971 Barolo, and the wine is drinking beautifully at age forty-one. The bouquet is deep, complex and very refined, wafting from the glass in a blend of dark berries, charred wood, venison, autumn leaves, lovely soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and *à point*, with a fine core, lovely, resolved complexity, melting tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and classy finish. A lovely bottle at its peak, but still with plenty of life in it. 2012-2030. **92**.



The top of the cru of Monprivato, with the village of La Morra in the distance. (John E. Morris © 2011)

1970 Barbaresco “Rabajà”- Produttori del Barbaresco

The 1970 Rabajà from the Produttori is a very lovely, fully mature example of the vintage, but our particular bottle was just a touch shaken up and so we had to taste it through a bit of suspended sediment. The bouquet is deep, complex and quite refined in its tertiary blend of cherries, new leather, nutskins, gamebirds, a touch of red curry, forest floor and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fully resolved, with just a touch of astringency showing from the recalcitrant sediment, fine focus and complexity, and a long, soil-driven and very classy finish. I am sure perfectly stagnant bottles would score two or three points

higher than this bottle, but one has to chew through nebbiolo sediment on occasion. 2011-2030+. **89+?**

1970 Barolo-Cappellano

The 1970 Barolo from Cappellano is a broad-shouldered, old school Barolo that seems to just be starting to get a touch oxidative on the palate, though the bouquet remains fresh, vibrant and impressively complex. Perhaps it was just our bottle of this wine (which I have only had the pleasure to taste on a single occasion) and there are fresher bottles out there, but the slight touch of oxidation on the palate kept the score down a bit. The nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, balsam boughs, road tar, aged leather, *sous bois* and nutskins. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and still rock solid at the core, with modest tannins, tangy acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and mature finish. Without the bit of backend maderization, this wine would score two or three points higher, as there is very good complexity here and still plenty of fruit at the core! 2011-2025+? **89.**

1970 Barolo-Bartolo Mascarello

It is funny, given how much I love the wines from Bartolo Mascarello, that I had never previously tasted the 1970 until I was served this wine double blind by a friend here in New York a few years ago. It is a beautifully mature and classic vintage for the *Maestro*, offering up a pure and complex bouquet of cherries, gamebirds, fresh oregano, gentle road tar, forest floor, a dollop of black licorice and a topnote of dried roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite structured for a 1970, with a fine core, tangy acids, still a fair bit of ripe tannin to carry it forward and lovely focus, length and grip on the well-balanced and very classy finish. This wine may well still be climbing in quality and not yet into its apogee! 2012-2035+? **92+?**

1970 Barolo- Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio

While I have been fortunate to taste the 1970 Monprivato from Mauro Mascarello (the first vintage ever produced on its own) on a handful of occasions, this was the first time I had tasted the 1970 Barolo *Normale* from the Mascarello family. This is really a stunning wine and perhaps every bit as fine as the Monprivato, as it offers up a deep, complex and totally *à point* nose of black cherries, leather, licorice, road tar, a nice touch of hazelnuts, a beautifully complex base of soil tones and a topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality, with a rock solid core, superb soil signature, moderate tannins and a very long, palate-staining finish that closes with a nice balsamic note. This is nowhere near as elegant as the 1970 Monprivato, but it may just be as complex and vital in its own way. Certainly a lovely, old school bottle of Barolo with years and years of life ahead of it! 2011-2050. **94.**

1967 Barolo- Giacomo Conterno

This most recent bottle of the '67 Barolo *Normale* from Giovanni Conterno was not one hundred percent pristine, as the cork was a bit crumbly coming out of the bottle, but even in its slightly impaired condition (kind of like Bob Dylan in his prime when he might have taken just a wee bit too much to drink backstage) there was still a lot of heart and soul in this bottle. The bouquet is deep and beautifully tertiary in its mélange of desiccated cherries, porcini, road tar, *sous bois*, coffee, a touch of onion skin and charred earth. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely focused, with melting tannins and very good, but not great, length and grip on the autumnal finish. Perfect bottles have far more structural integrity and mid-palate depth than this particular bottle, but that said, this was still a very tasty bottle for current drinking. I suppose I should count myself lucky to have had this wine often enough to spot its less than perfect character! 2012-2022. **91.**

1967 Barolo-Bartolo Mascarello

As I noted in my article on Bartolo Mascarello back in October 2007, I was down to my last bottle in my cellar of the beautiful 1967 Barolo from this legendary producer, and it was inevitable that it would not last too, too long in my collection. Happily, this last bottle was the best of five really splendid examples I drank over the last decade, as the wine offers up a pure and utterly brilliant aromatic constellation of cherries, anise, orange zest, fresh herb tones, hazelnuts, camphor, a beautifully complex base of soil, gentle notes of road tar and a topnote of violets and roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and absolutely at its apogee, with a sappy core of sweet red fruit, brilliant soil inflection, moderate tannins, bright, tangy acids and stunning length and grip on the perfectly balanced and magically complex finish. It is like saying goodbye to an old friend drinking this last bottle of the '67 Bartolo, but they all went to a very good cause! 2012-2025+. **95.**

1964 Barbaresco- Gaja

It had been many, many years since I had last tasted the beautiful 1964 Gaja Barbaresco, which predates the release of single vineyard bottlings from this iconic estate, which did not commence until the 1967 vintage. The 1964 Barbaresco was consequently a blend of all the best crus owned by the Gaja family at this time and the wine offers up a deep, complex and *à point* bouquet of cherries, fennel seed, fresh oregano, road tar, orange peel and a superb base of autumnal soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a lovely soil signature, a nice spine of tariness, moderate tannins and fine length and grip on the very classy and vibrant finish. This wine has no doubt been into its plateau of peak drinkability for many years already, but it remains at its apogee and shows no signs of slowing down for many decades to come. A superb wine. 2011-2030+. **93.**

1964 Barolo- Rennato Ratti

The cork on the '64 Rennato Ratti Barolo was rather crumbly, so perhaps this bottle was not a perfect example of the wine and better bottles are out there. Despite its touch of oxidation for the failing cork, there was still plenty to enjoy here in its aromatic blend of red berries, sweet balsamic tones, road tar, *sous bois*, sautéed onions, orange rind and nutskins. On the palate the wine is medium-full and fairly delicate in terms of structure, with a nice core of sweet fruit, good soil inflection and impressive length on the modestly tannic and tarry finish. I am sure that there must be better bottles of this wine, but I very much enjoyed drinking this bottle at the time we opened it and look forward to the day when I might cross paths with a pristine example. 2008-2015. **87.**

1961 Barbaresco- Giuseppe Mascarello e Figlio

As Mauro Mascarello's father, Gopin Mascarello, was blending his wines back in this era (the first single vineyard wine from the Mascarello family was the 1970 Monprivato), there is no vineyard designation on this wine, so I do not know if this is the product of a single vineyard, or if *Signor* Mascarello purchased grapes from several different crus to produce this bottling of Barbaresco back in 1961. In any event, the wine is really a lovely and *à point* bottle of Barbaresco, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, a touch of fennel seed, *sous bois*, sweet onions, fresh herb tones and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and fully mature, with lovely transparency, fine focus and balance, a gorgeous sense of transparency and a fine grip on the very long and tangy finish. This is fully mature, but still has really lovely structural integrity and shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. 2010-2025. **91.**

THE TIMELESS 1928 CLARET VINTAGE



Château Palmer- home to one of the greatest of the timeless 1928s.

After this month's saga of the Rudy Kurniawan trial for faking old wines from some of the wine world's greatest Burgundy and Bordeaux producers finally came to a close with a guilty verdict, I thought it might be interesting to trot out some older notes on some even older wines that were not fakes and harken back to a time when the fears of fraudulent wines were nowhere near as hysterical as they are today. Many of these notes date back to the late 1990s or early 2000s (a few years prior to my launching View From the Cellar) and were tasted in the backdrop of the last big fraudulent wine scandal- this one involving alleged wine fraud artist Hardy Rodenstock of Munich, Germany. At this time, the realization that there could be an epidemic in fraudulent wines was only just dawning on the fine wine markets, but many at that time seemed content to treat the Rodenstock era of mostly large format bottles of rare old Bordeaux (some bottles purportedly owned by Thomas Jefferson) as an aberration and try to distance themselves from those wines, while plunging head first into any other sector of old and rare wines where they could make some quick and easy money. Sadly, the following decade and a half saw many a blind eye turned by members of the wine trade and a great expansion of questionable old wines find their way out onto the auction floors around the globe and this was the genesis of the Rudy Kurniawan saga.

However, one must remember that there is (and was) also a very real cache of older wines that have survived many decades in cellars and have been temped out from their comfortable hibernation in personal collections as prices for old wines have escalated exponentially, and one must be careful not to have a knee-jerk reaction to every old bottle that

one comes across such as “this must be a fake.” Just this morning, as I was preparing to write this introduction, I looked at a photo of empty bottles of 1900 Château Mouton-Rothschild and 1900 Château Pétrus on a wine internet bulletin board, which looked to be “négociant bottlings”- probably from Belgian or French merchants- who would have been very active purchasing claret in cask and bottling it themselves back in this era. The predictable string of posts about the photos was that these must be fakes, because the labels did not match current labels for the wines, was offset by at least one person who knew enough about older Bordeaux to recognize the labels as merchant bottlings and comment that there would be no specific reason to doubt the authenticity of these wines simply because of the (now) unfamiliar labels. While I did not spend much time looking at the photo, what I thought most interesting about this thread was not the bottles themselves, but the quickness to condemn the wines by a few people feeling compelled to post their opinions without any real experience tasting Bordeaux from this era. Now, I am all for democracy, but it would be nice if folks would realize that there also remains a very real basis of knowledge and experience when it comes to old wines and that simply drinking young wines and owning a keyboard does not necessarily mean one can add anything of value to a conversation where one is so clearly out of one’s depth.

In any case, against this backdrop it seemed like a good time to finally get around to posting this small handful of notes on the 1928 claret vintage, as it remains one of the most important and compelling vintages of the twentieth century and absolutely unique in its extraordinary ability to age so long and gracefully. There are a number of reasons why I feel that the 1928 Bordeaux vintage is a very useful one to look at today, despite the fact that there are scant few examples still out there these days and the prices for what bottles remain extant are painfully lofty. First of all, this is one of the longest-lived and most tannic vintages in the history of the region, and its long and slow journey to maturity should serve as a very useful crucible to weigh the relative merits of other very tannic vintages of recent memory, such as the 2010s. Secondly, given its rather unique pace of evolution- many of the Médocs were reported to be virtually undrinkable for forty or fifty years after release, only to blossom in the late 1970s and 1980s and start to offer some of the most beautiful claret drinking of the twentieth century vintages once they finally got around to opening up- it is a very important vintage to keep in mind when trying to come to grips with the relative youth of an old bottle on the table without immediately jumping to the conclusion that “this must be a Rudy or a Hardy bottle” because the wine remains vibrant and *à point* at a very advanced age. These days, we tend to dramatically underestimate the potential longevity of so many recent vintages (at least for classically-crafted wines from their respective regions) and it is always good to have wines like the 1928 clarets still around to serve as a barometer of expectations for the potential of younger vintages to evolve with bottle age.

Thirdly, the notes that follow will be notable for their relative dearth of the greatest Bordeaux estates appearing in the number of wines tasted (yes, there are notes on Lafite-Rothschild, Palmer, Haut-Brion and Ausone below, but wines at this level are hardly the majority of the roster of ‘28s that follows, and as we will see, the 1928s from both Lafite and Haut-Brion have had their detractors down through the years), and I think this is one of the most useful aspects of this report, as it underscores the rewards that can still be found with old wines if one takes a step down from the level of “trophy wines” and seeks out estates that were producing fines wines back in the old days, but may not be particularly sought after by the grandest of

collectors today. For one of the most effective ways to avoid getting stuck with fraudulent old wines is to seek out wines that are far less likely to have been worthwhile to counterfeit in the first place, and this is clearly a useful strategy if one is interested still in pursuing great old wines to add to the cellar or to round out one's tasting experience. What would be the point of faking bottles of 1928 Haut Bailly for instance, when a counterfeiter could make so much more money for the same effort if one were to fake bottles of 1928 Latour or Pétrus instead? And a strategy of eschewing trophy level wines is certainly a very viable option far beyond the reaches of the Gironde as well, as similar reasoning is equally appropriate in the worlds of Burgundy, Piemonte, Rhône or California, where only the fanciest labels and vintages are likely to be targets of wine fraud. Old vintages of Savigny-lès-Beaune, Nuits St. Georges, Mont-Redon or Marcarini are far safer bets these days than the likes of La Tâche, Richebourg, Château Rayas or Monfortino, and as great as it is to drink magnificent old bottles of the world's most cherished wines such as Monfortino or La Tâche, there is also certainly a very real value in the peace of mind of purchasing and drinking wines that fall in a category where faking them would be highly, highly unlikely.

For much of the following history of the vintage, I am deeply indebted to Bernard de Laage of Château Palmer and his team, who very kindly sent me notes from "De l'Air de Temps" by Messieurs Tastet and Lawton, who chronicled the weather and business of Bordeaux during this era and from which the "play by play" of the 1928 Bordeaux growing season are excerpted. The 1928 vintage in Bordeaux was one of the great classics of its era- though not without its share of struggles and controversy out of the blocks. The spring started out very warm and precocious, with a surprising burst of heat in March during the stretch from the 8th through the 11th, which got the sap flowing in the vines, and which was promptly followed by plunging temperatures, a bit of snow flurries and some frost on the 12th, 13th and 14th of the month. This last blast of wintry weather is reported to have most adversely affected the cabernet franc vines, as cabernet sauvignon, merlot and malbec were much less affected by this brief cold snap. The rest of March was very wet, and the following two months were not much better, as during almost all of April and May there was nearly constant rain and the temperatures remained quite chilly. I am sure that the *Bordelais*, pelted by incessant rain and unseasonable temperatures for most of these two months, could not imagine a great vintage was in the works, and most people were probably just hoping that the rain would finally stop and normal temperatures arrive to get the growing season underway! However, this wet spring would at least help build up the water reserves for the vines to keep cruising along in the heat of the summer (a dramatic difference from 2010 for instance, where drought was one of the defining, detrimental elements of the vintage) and is one of the reasons the wines ultimately ended up so well-balanced, as there were no periods of maturation "shut down" due to hydric stress in 1928. It was not until the 25th of May that temperatures started to climb, but once the temps started rising, summer wasted no time and by the first of June it was over thirty degrees Celsius during the days- though there were still occasional showers overnight during the early part of this month which continued to feed the water tables.

The flowering in 1928 occurred under perfect, warm weather conditions between the 15th of June and the end of the month, and then the remainder of the summer that followed was everything the grapes could ask for, with plenty of sun, no heavy rains and continual heat in the middle of the growing season that thickened the skins and would create the chassis of tannin on

which this timeless vintage would eventually roll on into history. It is interesting reading to see Monsieur Lawton's reports from the summer of 1928, as almost all of the comments for April and May are about how "terrible the cold and wet weather is", and then from the first of June forward, every sentence seems to start out with "it is a beautiful and very hot day". The month of August in 1928 continued the very warm and dry weather (with just an occasional shower sprinkled in from time to time assisting the avoidance of any hydric stress in the vines), and setting the table for a lovely vintage. The harvest started on September the 25th of this year, which was relatively early for this era in Bordeaux (when October harvests were the norm, not the exception) and reflected the very torrid summer of '28, with a fairly large crop by the standards of the day. There were scattered showers during a few days of the picking in 1928, but generally the harvest took place under ideal conditions and was completed by the end of the first week of October.

The cabernet sauvignon grapes in particular in 1928 were thick-skinned and produced very tannic wines, and the wines were purported to have shown extremely well out of barrel and initially the vintage was quite popular with the Bordeaux trade during the *En Primeur* sales period. However, the wines were not quite as warmly embraced when futures orders were eventually delivered to merchants in 1931 and 1932. Of course, things had changed a bit economically between the picking of the grapes in late September of 1928 and the wines' bottling in 1931, as Wall Street had collapsed in 1929, and the economic malaise was in full force in important Bordeaux markets such as England and the US, as well as just starting to cast a shadow over France in the early 1930s (though the country would remain relatively prosperous for much of the first half of the decade of the '30s and less afflicted by the economic collapse felt so sharply elsewhere). The other element that took some luster off of the shine of the 1928s was the superlative quality of the 1929s that soon followed, as this was another exceptional vintage on both sides of the Gironde, and ever after these two vintages have been linked as the high quality "twins" of this era and inevitably compared, contrasted and measured to a nicety in the perceptions of one to the other. For the most part, the 1929s, with their more forward, plush, generous personalities were ranked higher than the more sturdy 1928s, and as the decades rolled by and seemed to not touch the 1928s, the perception of the superiority of the 1929 vintage continued to grow.

For much of the reporting on the tenor of the wine market back in this era and the reception that the 1928s received over the first several decades of their life, I have relied on the fine (and, sadly, out of print) book on Bordeaux by Edmund Penning-Rowsell (first penned in 1969 and updated a few times subsequent), whose perspective certainly captures plenty of the feelings of the wine trade regarding this vintage in the early days and whose later experience allowed him ample opportunity to taste this vintage throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, when the wines were generally still shut down and awaiting an awakening in bottle. Mr. Penning-Rowsell reports that André Simon (a French national living in London and a very important Bordeaux merchant of the prior generation) commented very favorably on the 1928s when he tasted them out of cask the following year, though noting that on the Médoc that the wines were certainly very tannic and many in the trade at the time compared the vintage to the style "of another '70" (here meaning the 1870 vintage!) and Monsieur Simon was not certain if the claret market of his day was willing to warmly receive such another long-lived vintage, as "there was not now the same inclination to wait fifty years" for the wines to blossom. As it

turned out, the 1928s from the Left Bank ended up taking more than sixty years to ultimately blossom. However, Mr. Penning-Rowsell notes that the 1928 vintage was quite widely bought by the English wine trade during the *En Primeur* campaign the following summer, as they had generally sat out the previous good vintage of 1926 (England having felt the pinch of the very hard economic times after World War I far earlier than either the US or France- though much of the English trade's reluctance with the 1926s had to do with France's revaluation of the Franc prior to the vintage being offered for sale) and merchants here had not widely purchased a new Bordeaux vintage since the 1924s.

However, as 1931 came in and the 1928s were ready for shipping, there was quite a bit of controversy surrounding some of the wines and those who had purchased the wines were not anywhere near as enthusiastic about these very structured wines as had been the case when they were offered for sale *en primeur* in the middle of 1929. First, the excellent quality of the far more suave, accessible and high quality follow-up vintage of 1929 was very much common knowledge by this time, and there had been some difficulties caused by the continued warm weather of the autumn of 1928 and some wines from this vintage were purported to have had difficulties with fermentations. Two of the First Growths are cited by Mr. Penning-Rowsell as particularly unsuccessful in 1928: the aforementioned Lafite-Rothschild and Haut-Brion, with reports circulating at the time that both wines had to be pasteurized because of problems during fermentation. In fact, he reports that when the 1928 Lafite was finally released in 1931 to merchants on the Chartrons who had purchased it *En Primeur*, there was a great deal of unhappiness with what was perceived to be the inferior quality of the 1928 vintage here and there was even legal action initiated on the behalf of some of the important *négociants* against Lafite to force the château to accept returns of their 1928. Eventually, large stocks of 1928 Lafite-Rothschild were indeed returned to the estate. Haut-Brion was also rumored to have been pasteurized in this vintage, though if this was the case, it certainly did not adversely affect the glorious bottle of this wine that has crossed my path on one unforgettable occasion.

So, what are the style and condition of the 1928s today? I can still vividly recall the very first example of the 1928 Bordeaux vintage I tasted, which was the '28 Haut-Bailly back in the early 1990s, and I was simply stunned by the depth of fruit and the youthful structure that the wine showed at that time! It was a wine completely out of my realm of previous experience, as I simply could not believe that a wine could be this old in years and so young and beautiful in terms of its evolution. And this remains the style of a great many of the 1928s, with a palate profile that has almost defied time and (in most cases) continues to be defined by great depth of ripe fruit, lovely soil signatures and still a surprising amount of tannin buried deep in these wines. If one tastes a top example of the vintage blind, one is often struck by the seeming juxtaposition of the aromatic and flavor complexities of these wines (that can only be arrived at with very long bottle aging) and the still relatively plush, dense fruit textures and the substantial tannins that still define many of these wines to a certain degree. And this is a characteristic that is true of wines from the Médoc, Graves or the Right Bank, despite there being significant differences in the style of the wines from each region and which the old English wine writers are all quick to point out in their commentary on the vintage.

The 1928 vintage in Bordeaux is not the most elegant of vintages, and this was a quality that was soon apparent to the wine trade of this era, as 1928 was followed by a vintage that was extremely long on elegance, breed and succulent charm out of the blocks- the 1929s. I have only had one occasion of comparing a great example from the 1928 and 1929 vintages side by side (though I have been fortunate to taste a fair number of 1929s as well down through the years), and that was at the extraordinary Château Beychevelle tasting organized by my good friend Victor Lederer here in New York in 2011, as I was gearing up at this time to write my historical feature on this great and woefully underappreciated estate in St. Julien. Tasting those two legendary wines side by side, it is very easy to imagine how often tasters in the 1930s and 1940s (when the dismal political and economic times of those two decades allowed a respite of enjoyment and conviviality) would have compared the two vintages side by side and found the 1928s completely lacking in charm and refinement *vis à vis* its corresponding 1929. I am absolutely certain that the old accounts of just how tannic the 1928s were in the first several decades of their lives (particularly the Left Bank wines) are not exaggerated, and this would have made them far less attractive when viewed through the prism of the classically proportioned and beautiful 1929s. In fact, due to these factors, a fairly large percentage of the 1928 Bordeaux vintage remained unsold for a long, long time, either sitting in merchants' or *négociants'* cellars or back at the châteaux, and this is one of the reasons that one can still find these very old wines available in the market on occasion. Back in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, when the recalcitrant Left Bank wines were finally starting to really come into their own, it used to be a fairly frequent occurrence to see offers of 1928 claret go across my desk. Today, the wines have gotten far more expensive than they were back then (what has not?), and there are far fewer bottles out there on the market, as a great many found good homes and were consumed in the '80s and '90s, but there are still offers of 1928s on the market from time to time.

The 1928 vintage on the Right Bank has always been considered slightly superior- or perhaps, more classically balanced would be the more appropriate term- to the wines on the Left Bank, as the reliance on the less tannic merlot and cabernet franc grapes in Pomerol and St. Émilion was considered an advantage in this very structured and long-lived year. The Right Bank wines, since the very earliest days (the descriptions of André Simon, cited in Mr. Penning-Roswell's book, being the oldest that I have seen) describe wines that are deep, round, pure and velvety in texture, with superb balance, wonderful aromatic complexity and appeal. In contrast, the Left Bank wines are described as very much dominated by their tannins in their early days (which were probably thirty to forty years in length for this vintage!), but also powerfully fruity and very well-balanced, if not as elegant as great, more classically-styled years in the Médoc such as 1929. And, as is so often the case, the few descriptions from way back when of the Graves wines would find them falling stylistically somewhere between the Left and Right Banks. In all the early commentary that I can find on the 1928s (and there is surprisingly little out there about this timeless vintage in recent books on Bordeaux), it is often cited that the worldwide economic downturn in the 1930s, followed by the Second World War, caused a large percentage of this vintage to remain unsold for many decades, and I am sure that another important reason for the long time this vintage spent in the pipeline was the tannic style of the vintage often left many in the wine trade in the first half of the twentieth century wondering if these wines were ever going to come around. This was especially true of the wines from the Left Bank in '28.



Happily, the vintage did defy logic and eventually blossom prodigiously on both the Right and Left Banks, with even the most tannic Médoc starting to stir in the 1980s and the vintage really came into its own in the decade of the 1990s. I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to taste a goodly number of 1928s in the decade of the 1990s and I will never forget how surprisingly young and powerful these wines were at this time. The ‘28s are often described in the old English literature of the time as being a “high alcohol vintage”, but by today’s standards, I do not know really what this means. To go back to *De l’Air de Temps*” by Messieurs Tastet and Lawton, writing just before the harvest, Monsieur Lawton reports that natural sugar levels were in the 11.5 to 12 percent range for the grapes on the vine as the end of September loomed, and he observes that the finished wines (which would have been chapitalized at least a bit in this era) ended up in the 12.5 to 13 percent range in general, with an occasional very ripe wine in the mid-thirteens. By today’s standards, these are certainly not particularly ripe wines and in fact, they do not bear a lot of resemblance to the far more alcoholic wines of 2010. Not surprisingly, none of the 1928s I have been fortunate enough to cross paths with over the years have ever shown any signs of *sur maturité* on either the nose or palate, and none of them would every qualify as “Port-like” in their descriptions the way, for example, the 1947 Cheval Blanc is often described (rightly so in my experience). Every 1928 I have tasted has shown marvelously ripe fruit- but certainly not overripe- with great concentration, and with no characteristics that I would ever describe as “over the top” the way I would describe a great many of the 2010s. The wines have never been as borderline volatile as another concentrated old vintage that comes to

mind, the 1947s, and the fruit has never seemed as “roasted” in character as either of these vintages. The 1928s are just generally very, very concentrated, but rather classically-profiled wines in terms of aromatics and flavors, and other than the bottomless depth that so many of them exude, the other striking characteristic is that a great many remained tannic well past their sixty-fifth birthdays and were still quite chewy wines when I first started to taste them with a bit of regularity in the decade of the 1990s.

I should take just a moment to talk about a few of the wines from 1928 that I have never had the good fortune to cross paths with during the years, but which are highly praised in the wine books of earlier generations. In general, the consensus seems to be that the 1928 Château Latour was the Left Bank wine of the vintage and it is a legendary vintage for this famed estate. I have never tasted it, but have had the equally highly-regarded 1929 Latour on a handful of occasions and it is reported by Edmund Penning-Rowell in his fine book that the Cellar Master at Latour back in 1964 stated a preference for the 1928 over the 1929- though he notes that when the two vintages were served side by side at lunch at the château later that day, the group voted for the 1929 over the 1928! David Peppercorn notes that by the end of the 1980s, he felt that the 1928 Latour was finally beginning to overtake the legendary 1929 and pass it in quality. Château Leoville Las Cases is also reported to be a monumental example of the '28 vintage, and Mouton-Rothschild is purported to be only a small step behind the Las Cases and Latour. Both Pichon estates- Lalande and Baron- are also well-noted by David Peppercorn, and universally fine things are written about the 1928s from Châteaux Cheval Blanc, Canon, Figeac, Pétrus and Trotanoy on the Right Bank. Sadly, I have not had the pleasure to taste any of these wines to confirm or deny the observations of previous generations, but would expect sound bottles of all of them to still be in fine form and at their plateaus of maturity and certainly in no way approaching decline.

Today, if one can find well-stored bottles from the 1928 vintage, the wines remain remarkably pleasurable claret, with great depth and complexity and still a fair bit of tannin in their structures to continue to carry them for many more decades to come. And a search for 1928s is not quite as Quixotic as one might think, as there remains still an occasional citing of this vintage at auction or from merchants that specialize in old wines. In the wake of the Rudy and Hardy scandals of the last couple of decades, it is important to keep in mind a couple of things if one is tempted to take the plunge with a 1928 claret or two. One, it is certainly safer “bottom-feeding” a bit in this vintage, for as alluded to earlier, a fake 1928 is most likely to wear a Latour or a Pétrus label as anything else, as these would be the most lucrative bottles to produce by fraud. Additionally, regular-sized bottles are probably preferable when shopping for 1928s today, as larger-sized formats always come with a premium price tag and hence are again, more likely to be targeted by fraud artists. But, there can be some stunning rewards for the intrepid who might cross paths with a bottle of well-stored 1928 claret, as these are truly remarkable wines of great beauty and majestic power for an old school Bordeaux vintage. If you come across a 1928 that looks tempting, just use your head before your credit card. Ask yourself: “is this a wine that would have been worthwhile to make a fake of in the first place?” For some of the truly great 1928s commented on below, like Haut Bailly, Calon-Ségur, Domaine de Chevalier or Leoville-Poyferré, the answer is most likely to be that a person concocting fake bottles of old Bordeaux would not deem those wines as a worthy return on the investment of their time to make the fakes and the risk of putting them into the market. In most cases, I would

not hesitate if the bottle looked good to jump at wines such as these if the price was within my comfort zone.

I should also take a moment to talk a bit about the “Nicolas Bottlings” of old claret that appear for some of the wines that I have tasted. The large French wine merchant firm of Nicolas was for a very long time one of the largest (if not the largest) purchaser of stocks of Bordeaux for laying down in the entire world. Nicolas used to buy thousands and thousands of cases of claret back in the old days (when prices were such that it was not financial suicide to lay down large stocks of claret for decades prior to putting them on the market), and many of the greatest old bottles of claret that I have had the pleasure to taste originated from the Nicolas firm’s great stocks of Bordeaux. The company would almost always stamp in red on the front label “Nicolas” to denote that the old vintage had originated from their well-kept stocks. One noticed during the Rudy Kurniawan trial that the Nicolas stamp of approval still carries quite a bit of weight with old Bordeaux, as Mr. Kurniawan was alleged to have stamped “Nicolas” on some of his fake Bordeaux efforts. The firm used to re-cork their old Bordeaux stocks every twenty years, and would typically use bottles of the same wine (or this is at least my understanding) to adjust fill levels when they did the re-corking. This often made their examples amongst the finest on the secondary markets, as one generally got good fill levels, very good corks and quite fresh examples of the respective wine. I still find that a Nicolas bottling of old claret to be as good a representation of the wine as one is likely to find, but now knowing that Mr. Kurniawan was also aware of the benefit of the fine provenance of so many Nicolas bottlings, I would again take care to look for Nicolas bottlings that would have fallen below Rudy’s radar.

I have only briefly alluded to the comparison of the 1928s and the 2010s, which is the most recent, overly-tannic vintage of Bordeaux to come along, and it really does make sense to reflect a bit upon the 2010s in the context of a conversation of the 1928s. As one reviews the literature on the 1928s from the immediate era after the vintage, and down through the subsequent decades, one of the things that is remarkable is that there is never a discussion about the overall balance of these broodingly tannic young wines. Their very high tannin content is of course always mentioned, but there is never any comment about the wines having any issues with balance. The very high tannin levels are always mentioned alongside of the immense depth of fruit that these wines carry, and there is nary a concern about the fundamental balance of the young and chewy 1928s. Contrast this with the 2010s, which in general are between one and a half and two and a half degrees higher in alcohol (it is a very low alcohol 2010 that is under fourteen percent and plenty of wines are well north of fifteen percent!), and with these higher alcohol levels comes the attendant problems of the overripe, prune fruit tones of *sur maturité* and the much faster absorption rates of wood tannins into the wines from these extremely high alcohols. Keep in mind, that there was very little new wood used for those chewy 1928s, but the contribution of tannins from new wood to the already very, very tannic 2010s is going to be a defining element of this vintage over the long haul, and in many cases, it will be one of the dividing lines between potable 2010s and unequivocal, stillborn failures. There is also the question of the decidedly underripe acids of the 2010 clarets, which will further exert centrifugal force on the structure of the wines as the years go by. In short, the 2010 claret vintage, for the vast majority of wines, is composed of disparate elements of high alcohol, overripe fruit, underripe acidity and hard, tough tannins, and it seems highly unlikely that these elements will not conspire to shred the structure of the wines over time, rather than miraculously work in

unison to the remarkable transformation of these wines into world class claret over the coming decades. Given the currently crazy high prices that so many 2010 Bordeaux command today, the savvy course for those who have been sucked into the hype surrounding the vintage and purchased the wines is to try and sell them off sooner, rather than later, and perhaps use the proceeds to buy some of the magical 1928s that still float around on the market!

The following wines have been all tasted since the late 1990s and up through to the present time. I know that a fair number of these notes are a bit old now, but given the very unique, structured style of the 1928 vintage, coupled with the fact that (try as I may) I do not cross paths with bottles of 1928 claret with any great frequency, it seems that it is not a crime to be using older notes for a discussion of this very, very long-lived claret vintage. I should note that a fair number of the 1928s reported on below really did benefit from some extended time in decanter, as this is emphatically not a fragile vintage (even at eighty-five years of age!) and one can very safely assume that decanting the wine at least a good half hour before serving it will not be risky and will actually be beneficial to allow the wine to fully open up in the glass. The two most recent wines from 1928 that are reported on below- the Clos Fourtet and the Rouget- were opened a couple of hours before serving and certainly benefited from the aeration. I hope the following notes manage to convey some of the great joy that is inherent in drinking a fine example of 1928 claret these days, as this remains one of the most remarkable vintages in the history of this important wine region and the wines deliver an amazing degree of complexity and pleasure at a very advanced age- with most of the wines still decades and decades away from seeing the far side of their respective plateaus! A truly remarkable and timeless vintage.

Ste. Estephe

1928 Château Calon-Ségur

The 1928 Calon-Ségur is a magnificent example of the vintage that continues to drink at its absolute apogee of maturity and shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. The deep, pure and stunning nose soars from the glass in a blaze of cherries, red plums, cigar box, iron-infused soil tones, new leather and a smoky topnote that is more wood fire than tobacco in tone. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and brilliantly balanced, with excellent mid-palate depth, a very soil-driven personality, a touch of remaining tannin and stunning length and grip on the pure and vigorous finish. The 1928 Calon-Ségur is one of the greatest vintages I have ever had the pleasure to taste from this superb estate. 2006-2030+. **95.**

1928 Château Cos d'Estournel (Nicolas bottling)

This particular bottle of the 1928 Cos d'Estournel seemed just a touch “forced” in style and was showing just a bit of structural fraying around the edges. Given how vibrant most top 1928s are still at this point in time, I have to believe that this was simply a reflection of this particular bottle- rather than the state of pristine examples of the '28 Cos. The nose on this example is deep, complex and focused, offering up scents of dark berries, woodsmoke, tobacco, a touch of nutskin, herbs, earth tones and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite lovely on the attack, with good mid-palate depth and the aforementioned bit of fragility just intruding a bit on the long and classy finish. This was not a bad drink by any stretch of the imagination, but I would strongly suspect that there are even better bottles of this wine out there. 2006-2020+. **90+?**

Pauillac

1928 Château Lafite-Rothschild

The 1928 Lafite is not a wine that has a good reputation, but the one bottle of this wine I have had the pleasure to taste was a very nice, elegant, old school middleweight that was not short on either charm or complexity. In fact, the wine is a lovely, elegant and vibrant old Lafite, with great finesse and complexity exhibited on both the nose and palate. The perfumed bouquet offers up notes of cassis, a touch of coffee, herb tones, fine minerality, plenty of cedar and an intense topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, intensely-flavored and elegant, with great harmony and delicacy, and fine length on the complex finish. This is by no means a typically large-scale and youthful 1928, but it should have no difficulties cruising along for another ten to fifteen years. Reports that the wine was pasteurized seem like they could be true, but after seventy-five years, the wine is really nowhere near as bad as some reports make it out to be! A lovely, elegant old bottle of claret. 2003-2015. **91.**

St. Julien

1928 Château Beychevelle

The 1928 Beychevelle is another absolutely stunning example of the vintage, and while it is a bit more powerful in style than the 1929, it cannot quite match that wine for surreal complexity and refined elegance. The brilliant nose on the 1928 is a deep and still a tad youthful in its expression, as it offers up a great blend of red and black cherries, nutskins, cigar wrapper, orange zest, a glorious base of soil, coffee and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with layers of ripe fruit still holding court, melting tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long and beautifully complex finish. This wine really took a good hour to open up and shows every sign of lasting another fifty years or more. Stylistically, the 1982, 1986 and 1996 Beychevelles may one day evolve in the direction of this legendary 1928. A great, great wine! 2011-2050+. **96.**

1928 Château Branaire-Ducru

The 1928 Château Branaire-Ducru is a truly superb and quite classic bottle of claret from this year, with superb depth of fruit, marvelous aromatic complexity, broad shoulders and still quite a bit of tannin perking up its long finish. The bouquet is outstanding, jumping from the glass in a bright and almost exuberant blend of cassis, red cherries, meaty tones, black truffles, cigar smoke, dark soil tones and a bit of grilled nut in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, and like so many Left Bank 1928s, amazingly youthful, with great complexity, a fair dollop of firm tannin and outstanding length and grip on the focused and powerful finish. This is a wonderful vintage of Branaire-Ducru and it shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. 2000-2025+. **93.**

1928 Château Leoville-Poyferré

The 1928 Poyferré is another magnificent example of the vintage that with half an hour's air was able to fully blossom and shed its last residual tannins. For those that do not have much experience with the 1928 clarets, the youthful structure of these wines can be a bit of an eye-opening experience. The magnificent nose offers up notes of black cherries, Normandy apples, saddle leather, dried roses, earth, cigar smoke and herb tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and delivers a complexity that can only be harnessed with such a long life in bottle. The finish is broad, focused and beautifully balanced, with great breed and fine grip. The '28 Poyferré is one of the finest 1928s that I have had the pleasure to taste. 2003-2025. **94.**

Margaux

1928 Château Brane-Cantenac (Nicolas bottling)

I have had few top-notch vintages of Brane-Cantenac, and though the '28 is still quite powerful, it is typical of my experience with this château: a bit four-square and inelegant, despite the depth and size that the 1928 vintage has provided. The nose offers up notes of cassis, dark berries, earth, tobacco, herbs and damp wood. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, still a bit tannic and chunky, with solid length and modest complexity. Not a bad bottle, but a pretty unimpressive 1928. 2003-2020+. **87.**

1928 Château Palmer (Nicolas bottling)

I have had the good fortune to taste the '28 Palmer Nicolas bottling on two previous occasions, but this was the finest showing yet for this wine. We gave it a good forty-five minutes in decanter before serving it (previous bottles had been poured within ten minutes of being opened), and the additional air certainly did the wine wonders. The depth and purity of the bouquet on this wine is almost incomprehensible for an 85 year-old wine, as a youthful nose of pure mulberry and black cherry fruit, black truffles, tobacco, some soil tones and a pungent topnote of violets explodes from the glass. In comparison to the very complex '29 Latour that preceded this wine, this bottle of '28 Palmer is a veritable fruit bomb. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, loaded with pure, pungent fruit, impeccably balanced, and displays plenty of depth in the mid-palate. The finish is very, very long, with still a touch of tannin, and tremendous depth and intensity. A great wine that seems almost timeless. 2003-2050? **97.**

Graves

1928 Château Carbonnieux (Nicolas bottling)

This wine was served double blind at a friend's old Bordeaux dinner, and hence the myriad of other wines mentioned in the note, as I was trying to come up with a plausible guess for the wine early on. The arc in the glass of the surreal 1928 Carbonnieux would make an epic. I have never seen a wine change this much in the glass in the first ten minutes as this wine did, soaring from the glass from the moment it was poured with an exotic, Grange-like nose of intensely sweet blueberry, boysenberry and chocolate and a huge burst of serious, mouth-searing tannin. This wine had obviously been re-corked sometime in the past, as the cork looked to be from the 1970s or early 1980s, and I have little doubt that it was "topped up" with younger Carbonnieux when this was done, as the wine showed some overt new oak tones that simply would not have been part of the original 1928 patina. Two minutes after first pouring it, the wine morphed again in personality and seemed like a great vintage of Vega Sicilia Unico, as the nose had shifted markedly to the chocolate, citrus zest, tobacco and truffle side of the ledger. And then, the Graves soil began to make itself felt through the bombastic layers of 1928 fruit, and the wine's seventy plus years of bottle age began to show in terms of its depth of complexity. The initial blast of tough tannin put me in either 1945 or 1928 for a guess, and as the wine continued to evolve and mellow out on the palate, it turned into a wonderful drink. On the palate the wine is quite full-bodied, with a huge core of super sweet fruit, still plenty of tannin, and a long, complex, chocolate-covered finish. I would have preferred this wine if a bottle or two of the 1928 had been sacrificed when the re-corking was done, rather than having it topped off with a newer vintage, but despite its slightly "hybrid" nature, it really was still a lovely bottle to drink and had plenty of the timeless 1928 character still in evidence. 1999-2030? **93.**

1928 Domaine de Chevalier

I have only had the pleasure to taste the 1928 Domaine de Chevalier on one occasion—way back in 1995, but I can still taste this brilliant wine today in my imagination. More than fifteen years later, this remains one of the finest 1928s that I have ever tasted! The utterly profound nose soars from the glass in an almost Vega-Sicilia-like blend of sweet, sweet dark plums, black cherries, chocolate, black truffles, singed tobacco, a gloriously complex base of Graves soil tones and a smoky topnote. With air this wine became more and more signature Graves, dancing away from its early, Vega-like personality as the base of soil begins to assert itself. On the palate the wine is deep, plush, opulent, and utterly seamless on the attack, with layer upon layer of sweet fruit, perfect balance, and a long, profound finish. Remarkably, there remains a fair bit of tannin still in this wine, so it should continue to drink brilliantly for many decades to come. Only a long passage of time can work this kind of magic on a great Bordeaux vintage! A great, great wine with decades of life ahead of it! 1995-2040 **96.**

1928 Château Haut Bailly (Nicolas bottling)

The last bottle I crossed paths with of the 1928 Haut Bailly a few years ago was sadly undone by a poor cork and was slightly oxidized and not a shadow of its proper self. Happily, I have had the good fortune to taste this wine on a few occasions and find it to be one of the great, unknown wines of this era in Bordeaux. The bouquet is beautifully deep and complex, offering up a vibrant and mellowed blend of plums, black truffles, meaty tones, coffee, sweet cigar wrapper fresh herbs (including a touch of fennel) and a beautiful base of chocolaty old Graves earth. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite powerful for its age (and very much in keeping with the style of this vintage), with thick fruit, still a fair bit of well-integrated tannin and stunning length and grip on the focused and very, very complex finish. This is probably the greatest vintage of Haut Bailly I have ever had the pleasure to taste, and though this note dates back to the early 2000s, I have little doubt that this wine will continue to dazzle until at least 2025 (and probably beyond)! 2002-2025+. **95.**

1928 Château Haut-Brion

After the incredible fireworks of the re-corked 1928 Carbonnieux (served at the same dinner), we could not believe that the next wine in the lineup was a step up. The 1928 Haut-Brion is one of the most memorable bottles of Bordeaux I have ever had the pleasure to drink, with an extraordinarily deep and powerful nose of black truffle, meaty tones, figs, singed tobacco, intense Graves earth, leather, espresso, dark chocolate, a thick core of sweet cassis and plum, herb tones, hot stones and a base of oak. This is a huge and massively powerful wine on the palate, with such richness one starts intuitively reaching for a spoon, with a heady attack of 1928 dense fruit, and an unmistakable transition back to Haut-Brion signature flavors from the mid-palate back to the tidal wave of a finish. How a wine of such size and power can remain so balanced and focused is a mystery. The wine seemed to really mellow out over the course of the half hour we drank it, which leads me to believe that it is now fully into its plateau of maturity (a sixty-plus year climb!), where it should continue drinking magically for another couple of decades. It is a great, great wine. 1999-2025. **99.**

1928 Château Malartic-Lagravière (Nicolas bottling)

The 1928 Malartic-Lagravière from the Caves Nicolas collection is a really lovely example of this timeless vintage. The bouquet is deep and truly superb, as it jumps from the glass in a blaze of cassis, dark berries, a touch of gingerbread, balsam boughs, singed heather, cigar ash, damp earth and a nice touch of old wine maltiness that is decidedly not oxidative in nature. On the palate the wine is fullish, deep and really shows off that old Graves tobaccoey profile,

with fading tannins, most impressive depth and excellent length and grip on the singed, old Graves finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Malartic-Lagravière that still has plenty of life ahead of it, but is one of the more ready 1928s that I have tasted and probably should be drunk up over the next couple of decades. But a lovely wine. 2008-2025+? **91.**



The spring sap just starting to stir in vineyards in Pomerol.

Pomerol

1928 Château Rouget

I have had some simply marvelous Rougets from the decade of the 1940s, but had never previously tasted an example of this wine from so far back. When I first decanted this wine, I thought we were going to be in for a real treat, as the clearly original cork was in very good shape, there was still the vibrant depth of 1928 fruit in abundance and the color and aromatics seemed very likely to really open up with some aeration. Sadly, the wine did not really blossom with air and remained a bit four-square, rather flabby and slightly malty over the course of the hour or two that we followed it. The bouquet is a deep and old school Pomerol blend of plums, chocolate, leather, gentle maltiness, a nice dollop of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and plush, but not particularly focused or structured, with still plenty of fruit at the core, melted tannins and not a whole lot of grip on the thick and velvety finish. This is not a bad drink, but given how stunning the 1940s-era Rougets are, I had high expectations for this wine. 2014-2025. **85.**

St. Émilion

1928 Château Ausone

This particular bottle was recorked at the château a few years before we had at it in the summer of 2002. I am not usually a fan of recorked bottles (other than the meticulously maintained old Nicolas bottlings), but this wine showed superbly well. There was no hint of young wine in this superb 1928, which is a magnificent bottle of wine, seemingly timeless in much the same manner as so many of the top 1928s. The bouquet is magnificent, soaring from the glass in a mélange of crystallized red berries, toasted nuts, layers of chalky soil tones, heather, earth and fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and fresh, with stellar focus, a sappy core of fruit, and a long, heart-breakingly complex and elegant finish. While there remains a bit of well-covered tannin on the finish, this is one of the most polished 1928s that I have had the good fortune to taste. It will age for decades more on its impeccable balance, but it is a noble drink today. 2002-2045. **97.**

1928 Château Clos Fourtet

The 1928 Clos Fourtet is a beautiful old example of the vintage, and its evolution in decanter and glass is a perfect reflection of how this vintage typically behaves when opened after its long sojourn in bottle. When I first decanted this wine, there was an overt touch of oxidation on the nose, but over time, as the other elements began to rise up from the depth, this note vanished completely and by the time we served the wine an hour and a half later, it was absolutely singing and impressively fresh and pure. The stunning old nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of cherries, nutskin, chocolate, sweet spice tones, a truly beautiful base of soil, a touch of menthol, orange zest, rosehips and a bit of sealing wax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully transparent, with a great core of fruit, outstanding focus and balance and a very, very long, refined and complex finish. This is a stunning example of the vintage and a wine that has decades of life still ahead of it and will have no difficulties continuing to drink well past its one hundredth birthday! 2014-2040. **94.**

**THE BRILLIANT 2012 BURGUNDY VINTAGE:
THE EXTREMELY LOW YIELDS PRODUCE STUNNING BEAUTY**



2012 Vintage Overview and Assessment

Pages 36-45

Chablis

Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

Pages 45-46

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Pages 46-48

Domaine William Fèvre

Pages 48-52

Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Pages 52-55

Domaine Patrick Piuze

Pages 55-60

Domaine Raveneau

Pages 60-62

Gevrey-Chambertin

Domaine Denis Bachelet

Pages 62-65

Domaine Alain Burguet

Pages 65-66

Domaine Fourrier

Pages 66-68

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

Pages 68-72

Domaine Joseph Roty

Pages 72-77

Domaine Armand Rousseau

Pages 78-81

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Pages 81-83

Morey St. Denis

Domaine Dujac

Pages 83-87

<i>Domaine des Lambrays</i>	<i>Pages 87-89</i>
<i>Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils</i>	<i>Pages 89-93</i>
<i>Domaine Ponsot</i>	<i>Pages 93-96</i>
<i>Domaine Cecile Trémblay</i>	<i>Pages 96-98</i>
Chambolle-Musigny	
<i>Domaine Ghislaine Barthod</i>	<i>Pages 98-101</i>
<i>Domaine Louis Boillot</i>	<i>Pages 101-104</i>
<i>Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier</i>	<i>Pages 104-106</i>
<i>Domaine Georges Roumier</i>	<i>Pages 106-108</i>
<i>Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé</i>	<i>Pages 109-110</i>
Vougeot	
<i>Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat</i>	<i>Pages 111-113</i>
Vosne-Romanée	
<i>Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair</i>	<i>Pages 113-117</i>
<i>Domaine Méo-Camuzet</i>	<i>Pages 117-121</i>
<i>Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg</i>	<i>Pages 121-123</i>
Nuits St. Georges	
<i>Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils</i>	<i>Pages 123-126</i>
<i>Domaine Henri Gouges</i>	<i>Pages 126-128</i>
<i>Domaine Alain Michelot</i>	<i>Pages 128-131</i>
Savigny-lès-Beaune	
<i>Domaine Camus-Bruchon</i>	<i>Pages 131-133</i>
<i>Domaine Chandon de Briailles</i>	<i>Pages 133-136</i>
<i>Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot</i>	<i>Pages 136-138</i>
Beaune	
<i>Maison Bouchard Père et Fils</i>	<i>Pages 139-142</i>
<i>Maison Joseph Drouhin</i>	<i>Pages 142-154</i>
<i>Maison Louis Jadot</i>	<i>Pages 154-163</i>
Volnay	
<i>Domaine Michel Lafarge</i>	<i>Pages 163-166</i>
Meursault	
<i>Domaine François et Antoine Jobard</i>	<i>Pages 166-168</i>
<i>Domaine des Comtes Lafon</i>	<i>Pages 168-173</i>
Auxey-Duresses	
<i>Domaine Gilles Lafouge</i>	<i>Pages 173-176</i>
Puligny-Montrachet	
<i>Domaine Jacques Carillon</i>	<i>Pages 176-178</i>
<i>Domaine Leflaive</i>	<i>Pages 178-181</i>
<i>Domaine Etienne Sauzet</i>	<i>Pages 181-184</i>
Chassagne-Montrachet	
<i>Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard</i>	<i>Pages 184-188</i>
<i>Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils</i>	<i>Pages 188-192</i>
St. Aubin	
<i>Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy</i>	<i>Pages 192-196</i>

**THE BRILLIANT 2012 BURGUNDY VINTAGE:
THE EXTREMELY LOW YIELDS PRODUCE STUNNING BEAUTY**



The 2012 vintage in Burgundy will forever strike the *vignerons* of the region with a variety of emotions, as this was certainly one of the most difficult growing seasons of the last forty or fifty years, and yet, the wines that have been produced in so many cellars in 2012 must clearly be ranked amongst the most beautiful young Burgundies I have ever had the pleasure to taste. The vintage will be long remembered for the extremely short crop levels in Chablis, the Côte de Nuits and (particularly) the Côte de Beaune, but Mother Nature has at least compensated a bit for these very short yields with simply gorgeous wines of great seamless beauty. The growing season was utterly brutal to growers in both sections of the Côte d'Or and in Chablis, but it was particularly hard this year on those in the Côte de Beaune, who had the ignominy of having to endure three vicious hail storms in the wake of some of the most difficult early conditions in recent memory. As Louis-Michel Liger-Belair noted, "the 2012 growing season gave us a Master Class in vineyard depredations, as everything possibly bad that could happen in the vineyards we faced in the summer of 2012- with the exception of botrytis!" This is in the wake of short crops in 2010 and 2011, with only 2009 a so-called "normal" crop size in the last three years, and the summer of 2013 was equally unkind to *vignerons* in the Côte d'Or and Chablis and another extremely small crop is in store for the newest vintage as well. As many

producers commented, at least the quality of what was left at the end of the day in 2012 produced outstanding wines, which does not make up for having so little wine to sell, for at least all of the adversities were not accompanied by indifferent quality.

The year of 2012 started out tough enough, with freak frost in late April and early May damaging some vines, and then the flowering in June occurred under particularly unsettled conditions and there was both *coulure* and *millerandage* (poor or barren flowering and shot berries in the bunches) which promised to cut back the yields dramatically in this vintage from the outset. This was followed up by perfect conditions for *oidium* and mildew in the vines over the mid-summer, with it raining seemingly every other day, so that constant treatments (*biodynamique* or otherwise) were the rule of the day in 2012 if one wanted to protect the crop during the rainy weather of mid-summer. As Jeremy Seysses of Domaine Dujac noted, “our vineyard manager, Lilian Robin, was out on the tractor for sixteen hour days every weekend in mid-summer treating the vines, while spending every week directing the vineyard team in the constant fight” against the all of these threats and if they had not been so vigilant, “we would have had an even smaller yields or no crop at all.” To top this off, when the sun finally did come out on July 24th after all of this cool, overcast and damp weather, it came out with a vengeance, with temperatures soaring and the grapes getting badly sun-burned. One of the keys at harvest to making great wine in 2012 would be to make sure that the sorting teams removed all of the sun-burned berries on the sorting tables and out in the vines before collecting the bunches that were left- not a great many by this time. Sound fun?

So far, this laundry list of challenges to the *vignerons* was universally faced up and down the Côte d’Or and in Chablis, but a capricious Mother Nature had even more in store for domaines in the Côte de Beaune, as they were given the added slap in the face of three massive hail storms as well. The first struck in May, the second in June and the last one at the beginning of August, and all of them did substantial damage in the vines. Happily, the first two were mostly concerned with further reducing yields in the vineyards, as huge swaths of vineyards saw quantities pummeled during the flowering and when the tiny bunches were just forming, as well as shredding vegetation. The numbers are not pretty in the villages most severely affected by these three rounds of hail, as yields are off dramatically in Pommard, Volnay, Meursault, Auxey-Duresses, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet, with numbers ranging anywhere from fifty to eighty percent of the crop lost in the vineyards most affected by the successive rounds of hail. One of the most egregious examples was in the premier cru vineyard of Hameau de Blagny in Puligny, where Monsieur Boudot of Domaine Sauzet reported that their parcel, which is usually large enough to produce around ten barrels in a “normal” vintage produced all of one hundred liters of wine! Happily, the scarred berries and bunches tended to shrivel up and die in the wake of all the hail, so the wines do not show any signs of “hail taint”, but the miniscule production numbers of some vineyards are absolutely mind-numbing. In fact, in terms of unclean flavors and/or greenish tannins in the 2012s, the bigger threat in this brutally unsettled summer was the sunburned grapes, which if not completely removed prior to pressing and fermentation, can quickly spread their “arrested development” of green tannins and flavors into the wines in a most alarmingly efficient manner. Where 2012s will have “missed”, it will be primarily from the sunburnt grapes and the mess of *oidium* and mildew in the vineyards, not from the hail, which simply cut back yields savagely in the places where it ripped through the vines. Chablis was also not immune to the ravages of hail, as both Fourchaume and Valmur saw a massive loss of crop

due to a hail storm as well in 2012. Jean-Claude Bessin produced all of eight hectoliters per hectare in his parcels of Fourchaume this year!

So amidst all these vineyard war stories, how on earth did the Burgundians manage to make so many brilliant wines in this vintage? The key to the utterly amazing quality of so many of these wines lies in the miniscule yields, which at least allowed the remaining bunches to ripen thoroughly and quite beautifully in the latter half of the growing season, so that *vignerons* at least had some reward for their constant battles all year out in the vines. As Louis-Michel Liger-Belair commented, “if it were not for these extremely short yields, there is no way we could have made anything good in 2012, but the short crop saved us by the remaining grapes ripening perfectly.” From the tail end of August, the sun finally came out and stayed out through the picking, so after all of the struggles in the vineyards through spring and most of the summer, the *fin de saison* was absolutely beautiful and it was possible to gather the remaining grapes in the vineyards under absolutely ideal conditions. And one really should not understate just how beautiful so many of these wines have turned out in 2012! Ghislaine Barthod notes “that I do not think I have ever seen wines of such beautiful fruit tones as the 2012s, and I do not know if I ever will again.” Her husband, Louis Boillot adds, “it is not only the really beautiful fruit of the 2012s that stands out, but also the texture of the wines- the texture of the tannins here- which are so utterly refined that they are almost silky.” We will talk more fully about the style of both the red and the white wines of this vintage further along, but, I should just add here that across the board, the wines of both colors are also gorgeously transparent down to their respective *terroirs* and are a far, far cry from “fruit-driven” wines, with seamless, seemingly effortless balances and truly remarkable length and grip on the palate. There are really some absolutely timeless monuments to the beauty of Burgundy sitting in the cellars here in the Côte d’Or and in Chablis from the 2012 vintage!

When one looks at the individual regions of Burgundy in this vintage, it is hard not to be totally excited about the best wines across the Côte de Nuits, Côte de Beaune and Chablis (I did not taste a lot of Côte Chalonnaise or Mâconnais wines on this trip, but the ones I did taste were very strong and also the products of extremely short crop levels), but it is also important to note that the wines in each region are a bit different stylistically in each region in 2012, as the effects of hail were quite different in each section. In the Côte de Nuits, hail really played little real role in the quality of the wines in this vintage- or the size of the crop- as these characteristics were more clearly defined by the very, very difficult flowering season. But, once the small crop had set here, if *vignerons* were capable of controlling the *oidium* and mildew during mid-summer, they were destined to get truly remarkable wines of deep, pure and very fresh fruit tones, accompanied by strikingly transparent expressions of *terroir* and superbly suave tannins. In the Côte de Beaune, the three violent hail storms were a defining factor in terms of both quantity and the resulting style of the wines, with the remaining berries in the vineyards affected by the hail producing very, very concentrated wines of both colors. Some of these white wines are so deeply concentrated and powerful in style- though still very much in balance right now- that I really have no idea how they will age, as this style of pure, clean and such intensely concentrated white Burgundies are completely beyond my range of experience (and I have been visiting and tasting *sur place* in Burgundy since 1989). Not all of the white wines in the Côte de Beaune are this powerful, and the ones that are cut in more traditional styles are absolutely magnificent. For the red wines in the Côte de Beaune, the hail here has also very much concentrated the wines, but not to the extent of the white wines, and one of the biggest differences between the red wines

produced here from hail-battered vineyards and the luckier vineyards in the Côte de Nuits is in the texture of the tannins, as the Côte de Beaune reds do not generally have the same velvety textures to their tannins as the wines found further north.

In Chablis, while there was some loss of crop from hail as well, which struck Fourchaume and Valmur particularly hard in early May, the yields here were adversely affected for the most part from the problems with flowering- more along the lines of what the Côte de Nuits experienced, rather than the more serious meteorological war experienced by those in the Côte de Beaune- and from the dual threats of *oidium* and mildew that had to be constantly treated to keep the grapes healthy. There was also the deleterious effect of unseasonal frost on April 16th (after March had been far warmer than normal and got the sap flowing early in the vines), which damaged many vines (particularly in the grand crus of Valmur and Les Clos) and was responsible for a loss of crop loads by anywhere from five to ten percent more, except in the two grand crus most severely hit, where yields were reduced by thirty percent due to the frost. Additionally, sunburnt grapes in Chablis were every bit as bad in the Côte d'Or- if not worse- in this vintage. However, one of the key factors in determining ultimate quality in Chablis in 2012 (presuming one had controlled the mildew and *oidium* in the summer and sorted out the sunburnt grapes) had to do with start dates for the harvest, as the grapes ripened very nicely in the good September weather, but acids tended to fall precipitously at the very end of the growing season, and if one was a little late getting off of the mark in the fall of 2012, one ended up with plush, pure and pretty Chablis that really lacked a bit of cut and snap. One *vigneron* in Chablis noted that “although there was no overripe fruit in 2012, the vintage set the record for the sale of tartaric acid to add to the tanks” by producers who did not pick early enough and wanted to give their wines a bit more spine. So, one can certainly come across 2012 wines here that are snappy, tensile and likely to be legendary in the decades to come for their purity of fruit, striking signatures of *terroir* and very classic and racy structures, and other wines that will be fairly forward, succulent and rather easy-going out of the blocks (even with additions of tartaric acid) and unlikely to age particularly long- but, will also be very tasty for early drinking. Besides guarding acidity by picking earlier, many of the smaller estates who got started earlier with their picking were also able to avoid a couple of days of rain on September 25th and 26th that further hampered those in Chablis starting a bit late with the harvest.

Producers throughout Burgundy noted that the difficulties with the *floraison* in 2012 was particular hard on old vines, as these were the most seriously afflicted by *coulure*, as the flowering was particularly drawn out this year and there was plenty of cold weather and rain during the crucial flowering time. So, for a lot of the producers who are endowed with parcels of old vines, the yields were particularly short in 2012 and it did not require hail damage to cut back yields by more than fifty percent in this tumultuous growing season. A perfect example of how hard old vines were hit in 2012 is Denis Bachelet's superb Charmes-Chambertin, which in a “correct” crop will produce around eight barrels of wine- this year there are three and a half! With the hail damage of 2012, it was most severe, as I have said above, in the Côte de Beaune, with the three very large and damaging hail storms of the year mostly affecting villages from Pommard south, with Volnay, Auxey-Duresses, Monthélie and Meursault the most profoundly affected, but with everyone down to Santenay feeling more than their fair share of the wrath of these storms. Those who had been a bit luckier in the Côte de Beaune in 2012- Beaune, Savigny, Chorey, Aloxe-Corton and Pernand-Vergelesses- would feel more of the weight of 2013's also

brutal series of hail storms, but that will be part of next year's story. The path of the storms was just a bit lucky in Puligny-Montrachet in 2012, as it decimated premier crus on the northern side of the village in the direction of the Hameau of Blagny, but for the most part spared the grand crus. Likewise, in Saint Aubin, the very best vineyards up behind the center of the village were spared damage and produced at crop levels close to "normal" in 2012, while other vineyards on either side of the village were down on average from a quarter to a third. When I had first heard about the hail damage in the Côte de Beaune in 2012, I was most concerned about hail taint in the wines, that *goût de grêle* that so many of us who knew the 1983 Burgundies in their youth are all too familiar with from those days. Happily, I saw very little of this type of hail taint- with some wines showing a bit of a hard and dry edge to their tannins from hail, but this is a very small percentage of the wines that I tasted and it seems that reports that the impact of the hail was felt most keenly in terms of further decreasing yields was born out by the wines that I tasted. In fact, it is entirely possible that the very small handful of wines that I tasted with these hard, dry tannic edges were the result of sunburnt grapes and their underdeveloped tannins that were not adequately sorted out, rather than hail taint.

With all of the vineyard depredations weathered by *vignerons* in 2012, I had imagined that sorting at the time of harvest would have had to have been very rigorous to ensure that only the best grapes made it into the fermenters, but a great many producers reported that they were very surprised by how good so many of the surviving grapes looked at the time of picking- small and thoroughly ripe berries, with most of the damaged grapes that had not already fallen off in the vineyards during the summer quickly dropping out on the vibrating sorting tables that so many domaines now utilize here. And as I have noted above, sunburnt grapes were more the problem to be avoided at harvest, rather than hail-scarred fruit. However, when the berries were pressed, the very small amount of juice that they yielded had to be crushing to *vignerons* who had expended so much energy during the growing season to save the crop. There are lots of stories of certain parcels of vines producing yields under ten hectoliters per hectare in 2012! But, at least these very small quantities have often produced some pretty legendary wines, as the ratio of skins to juice has really provided for stunning depth of fruit- and very, very strikingly gorgeous fruit at that- in so many of the wines, and almost everything one tastes in 2012 also possesses simply stunning transparency down to its underlying *terroir* in much the same manner as found in the glorious 2010s. As I noted above, with the red wines, the Côte de Beaune tended to produce chewier and relatively more powerful wines than the Côte de Nuits, where the tannins are far more velvety in texture and have conspired with the stunning fruit and classic expressions of *terroir* to produce absolute legends in the making. In most cases, the reds of the Côte de Beaune have far less textural refinement to their tannins, but are very well-balanced wines of stunning depth and will be very long-lived and excellent when they have had a chance to blossom with bottle age.

As I have mentioned several times already, the white wines of 2012 are not as homogenous in style as the red wines of this vintage, but, it would not be correct to say that 2012 is stronger for red wines, as there are also some absolutely magical white wines sitting in barrels or tank at the present time in Burgundy. Of the white wines that I tasted during my two and a half weeks here in November, the ones that concern me the most are the super concentrated wines, as I simply have never encountered anything like them before from Burgundy and really have no sense of how they will evolve with bottle age. One has to remember that these very

powerful wines are simply the results of extremely low yields, and they are not concentrated and powerful from things like the concentrating effects of botrytis or soaring ripeness at the end of the growing season, as most have come in around thirteen percent alcohol with great purity of both aromatics and flavors and (often) piercing acidity (particularly in the Côte de Beaune). A great many of the most powerful white wines of this vintage are simply too much of a good thing at the present time, and they really are powerful enough to not be particularly pleasant to drink or taste today and one wonders how they will evolve with bottle age. Twenty years ago, I might have been inclined to speculate that wines with all this concentration, brisk acids and impeccable balances at these super-powerful levels would eventually come around and produce some of the most legendary white Burgundies of a generation. But, in this day and age of premature oxidation, who knows if the wines will blossom before premox comes to call.

But, the super powerful white wines of 2012 are certainly not the majority of what I tasted on this trip, and there are dozens and dozens (if not several hundred) of white wine cuvées that are absolutely stunning in this vintage, with many of them sharing the much more elegant style of the Côte de Nuits reds in 2012, with wonderfully intense and pure fruit, great soil inflection and superb acidity to give the wines bounce and brightness. One of the interesting aspects of the 2012s- both reds and whites- is that the acids in 2012 are very good (with several *vignerons* observing that they fall between the 2010s and the 2008s), but because the fruit has such depth to it this year, at this point in their evolutions, the acidity seems to be lower than it really is in this vintage. Perhaps, as the glorious puppy fat of fruit starts to calm down as the years roll away, the acids will become a bit more obviously prominent in the wines, but now, they are just buried in the succulent synthesis of the fruit and minerality. And please keep in mind that I did not visit some of my favorite white wine producers who I usually taste with in November, as due to the miniscule yields at some domaines, I deferred to the wishes of the estates who had told their importers that they simply did not want to entertain visitors this year- because they had so little wine. There was not one *vigneron* whom I spoke with this year who did not very quickly mention that doing allocations is going to be a nightmare with the 2012s, with so little wine to go around, and I am sure this problem is going to grow exponentially with merchants. It is going to be a very, very hard vintage to find one's customary favorite wines- particularly at the upper levels of appellation- and expect to be frustrated on more than a few occasions when hunting for 2012s. But, please keep in mind, this vintage is amazingly strong up and down the appellation hierarchy (producing perhaps the most beautiful crop of straight Bourgogne bottlings I have ever tried for instance), and do not hesitate to take lower level appellations this year than you might be accustomed to from your favorite producers. If you pass on the lower level wines, you are going to profoundly regret it in the years to come!

I should make mention that the extremely late harvest of 2013 has had a bit of an effect on the 2012 vintage as well, as it was often not possible for *vignerons* to tackle cellar issues such as racking or the like when the wines were first starting to call for it, as they were fully occupied bringing in the late crop of 2013. Consequently, cellars were in a far greater range of diversity this past November, with some wines (or whole cellars) ready for racking, some cellars having some of the cuvées already racked and others not, and some cellars with the wines already having had their final *assemblage* completed and the wines in tank, with their sulfurs adjusted and fining or filtration completed, when I can around to taste the vintage. Often, these practices were not necessarily done at the typical time in the cellars, so that often wines had been

manipulated only a few weeks (or even days) before I was scheduled to taste (and I am sure this was also true for many other visitors this past November) and many a *vigneron* apologized for having just had to rack or adjust sulfurs or fine or whatnot. There is also the issue of the timing of the completion of the malolactic fermentations, for though the malos in 2012 were generally not particularly late and usually finished up in June or July of 2013, in some of the coldest cellars, the wines were just finishing up malo in early November. For myself, I am much happier to have a producer tackle such cellar issues right before visitors arrive (and one should not underestimate just how many requests for visits domaines have received in November of this year, as the dual considerations of late harvesting of the 2013s and the short crop of 2012 has seen a concentration of tasters here this November that is simply unprecedented in my experience), rather than wait so that the wines are at their most presentable and risk harming their ultimate harmony to the exegeses of better presentation. And, of course, one needs a good month from the start of picking in Burgundy until the new vintage is racked out of fermentation tanks and into barrels in the cellars to await the start of malolactic, so in many cases *vignerons* had only just put the last of their 2013s into barrel a day or two before the queue of tasters began to arrive to sample the 2012s!

The following wines were all tasted during my two and a half weeks in Burgundy from November 11th until just before Thanksgiving. I will be back in the region again in March to taste more 2012s, but given the short nature of this crop, I expect that this coming spring's tastings may not be as comprehensive as was the case in November. It is going to be very hard for domaines who may have already bottled their 2012s to open the full range in cases where the crop is so short and clients are going to be begging for additional bottles out of what are sure to be short allocations. At this point in time, it also looks likely to be a vintage that is bottled relatively early, as most of the *vignerons* with whom I spoke are of the opinion that the 2012s are already reaching a really beautiful point of balance and evolution in barrel, and if the weather cooperates (one does not want to bottle if it is too cold), a great many are likely to bottle their 2012s a bit earlier than normal to preserve every last ounce of that utterly stunning fruit. In fact, the sole winemaker who mentioned that he felt the vintage's red wines are going to benefit from a longer *elevage* was Frédéric Barnier at Maison Louis Jadot, who felt his reds would see several more months in barrel prior to preparation for bottling. I will fully elaborate in the notes for each domaine in what stage of evolution I found the 2012s at the time of my visit, but at times a bit of extrapolation was necessary for certain wines, as they were not in the most flattering stages to taste for a variety of reasons, but where there was little doubt that the wines would ultimately be exceptional.

As has been sadly the case now for more than ten years, I have once again written up my projected windows of drinkability for the white Burgundies tasted as if the plague of premature oxidation did not exist, as I can think of no other logical method to express the style and structure of the young wines that I tasted in barrel during my November trip. Of course, the scourge still does most emphatically exist and the reality remains that most white Burgundies should be drunk up within six years of the vintage or people will start to risk losing bottles to premox. As I have written many times in the past, given the fact that premature oxidation is a bottle by bottle phenomenon, one's results are going to vary rather dramatically depending on how lucky one is and how cold one's cellar remains (as it has been my distinct impression that warmer temperatures get the phenomenon rolling earlier than

bottles that are kept extremely cool). But, as of the writing of this article, premox remains very much a threat to every producer's white wines in Burgundy (and many places beyond Burgundy as well) and the cause of the problem has still not been found. This is certainly not for a want of trying on the part of the Burgundians and many other interested parties the world over, but the problem remains with us today and there is little reason to suppose that the 2012 white Burgundy vintage will not be every bit as affected by premox in due course as every previous vintage since 1995. So please keep this in mind, and if the window drinkability in the tasting note of a particular premier cru in the article states that the wine will be best between 2020 and 2050, this is certainly not a suggestion to bury the particular wine in the cellar up until 2020 before starting to drink it, as the likelihood is that premature oxidation will start to be a threat to the vintage from 2018 forwards. In a perfect world, lucky bottles of the said wine will only start to reach their optimal point of evolution from 2020 onwards, but this will only be true of bottles that somehow manage to escape the long shadow of premature oxidation.

Chablis

As I touched upon above, the *Chablisienne* did not have it quite as tough as their Côte de Beaune neighbors, but 2012 was far from an easy or generous vintage in this northern Burgundian stronghold. Frost was the key problem at the outset of the year here in Chablis, as an unseasonably early start to spring in the warm weeks of March got the sap flowing and the vines out of their stage of winter dormancy early- making them susceptible to the frost that arrived in the second week of April and damaged many vines throughout the region. Many vines will have to be replanted in the coming years as a result, and the ill effects of the frost will be most keenly felt by those who do not put warming devices out in their vines at night, such as Vincent Dauvissat. Just as the trauma of the April frosts was being put in the rearview mirror, hail struck at the beginning of May and further reduced potential crop size, and again damaging many vines. Follow this up with the refrain of a long, drawn out and poor flowering under rainy and very cool conditions and the table was set for a very reduced crop in Chablis. As was the case in the Côte d'Or, the summer in Chablis was a battle against mildew and *oidium*, which was further hampered by on-again, off-again rain for many weeks that made the vineyards a muddy mess and stranded many a tractor that was injudiciously brought out into the quagmire to try and work the vines by machine. After week after week of rainy weather and constant treatments against vineyard depredations, the sun came out with a vengeance at the end of July and early August and caused a lot of sunburn to the grapes- further reducing what already was going to be a very short crop. After the scorching of the grapes at the start of the month of August, nature finally relented and the grapes in the vineyards of Chablis were able to finish their maturation process under very lovely conditions into early September, and *vignerons* were really starting to think about getting started picking from the middle of September forwards.

The sugar levels were not great in mid-month September (probably around 12.2 to 12.5 potential alcohol by this time) and the majority of producers thought it would be judicious to wait another week or two to get started to allow for a bit more phenolic ripeness in the berries. However, acids started to fall in the third week of the month (as the sugars climbed), so there was a fairly small window of optimal picking times and those who waited a bit too long tended to get wines that have absolutely gorgeous purity of fruit and very good soil signature, but which are quite forward and not as structured as those who got started picking a bit earlier and were able to retain that customary cut and snap of classic Chablis. As mentioned above, the sale of

tartaric acid in the appellation was at an all-time high in 2012 as several *vignerons* sought to add back some acids that they lost by waiting for a bit more ripeness. There were also a couple of days of rain on the 25th and 26th of September for producers to deal with, so it is pretty clear that those who decided to get started picking earlier had the advantage in 2012. Consequently, the range of Chablis I tasted during my six domaine stopover in the appellation ranged from pure, juicy and forward wines of great charm to utter classics in the making that are amongst some of the greatest young Chablis I have ever had the pleasure to taste. In this vintage in Chablis, it seems that some are more equal than others, but I suppose that is always the case. One of the interesting aspects of the 2012 vintage in Chablis is how beautifully the fruit is presented this year- due no doubt to the very low yields- and there is a lovely sheen of tangerine and orange in a great many of the wines that is not the result of overripeness or botrytis (such as in 2006), but rather just really pristine ripeness from very, very low yields. Often, I find the citrus fruit tones of a young and high quality vintage of Chablis to tend towards the more tart side of the spectrum of grapefruit, lemon and lime, but this year, it is a very rare example that shows any grapefruit, and more orange-like aromatics and flavors are the norm for so many of the wines. This is a very strong vintage in Chablis and I look forward to my spring visit here to taste a far wider range of producers' 2012s next year.



The grand cru slope of Chablis rising up behind the town center on a grey November morning.

For folks who have the opportunity to visit Chablis, I should also make mention that I had the pleasure to dine at the Hostellerie de Clos again on this visit and things have changed a bit in the kitchen here since my last visit a year ago. The Vignaud family, whose father was long the *Chef de Cuisine* at the restaurant here and earned its Michelin star, has hired the former *Sous Chef* from the three-starred restaurant of Lameloise down in Chagny to take over the kitchen at the Hostellerie, and I managed to have two outstanding meals here in the two days of my stopover in Chablis and I was absolutely smitten by the great style and quality of the cuisine here. For many years, the kitchen at the Hostellerie has been excellent in a rather old-fashioned manner, turning out what I like to think of as “Burgundian comfort food” which has often gone perfectly with the cold, snowy conditions of my winter visits to Chablis, but there are culinary fireworks going on in the kitchen here these days and it is very easy to come to the conclusion that the creativity in the kitchen today is as high as it has ever been at the Hostellerie de Clos and this must now be counted as one of the culinary destinations in all of Burgundy. If, like me, you were previously unaware of the change at the stoves at the Hostellerie de Clos, I cannot recommend the restaurant highly enough today and urge you to make a stay at the hotel and partake in the great food now being turned out here with great creativity and *élan*.

Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin (Chablis)

Jean-Claude Bessin was one of the producers in Chablis that really suffered at the hands of Mother Nature in 2012, as two of his prime vineyard parcels- Fourchaume and Valmur- were hammered by hail in early May and the production here was miniscule in this vintage. And this was after April frosts had already damaged many vines in his vineyards, and all of the struggles of poor flowering, oidium and mildew battles were still ahead of him. In the end, he was not able to produce his special old vine bottling of “la Pièce au Comte” from Fourchaume, as he was reduced to producing only a single cuvée from this vineyard from yields of eight hectoliters per hectare! The Valmur crop was equally tiny in 2012, so there will be very little of this stellar wine to go around in this vintage. With the 2013 harvest also very small at Domaine Bessin, there is not going to be a lot of wine to go around from this excellent producer over the next couple of years, and let us hope that 2014 will see a return to a normal-sized and high quality crop level to make up a bit for these very two lean years in terms of production for Monsieur Bessin. All of the 2012s had been racked and assembled for bottling at the time of my visit at the end of November of this year, with bottling scheduled to take place at the end of the year or very early in 2013. I did not taste the Chablis villages bottling on my visit, and cannot now recall whether this had just been prepared for bottling, or if this was another cuvée that was devastated by the capricious mood of nature in 2012. The quality of the wines which I did taste here in 2012 is exceptionally fine, with outstanding focus, depth, precision of terroir and excellent balances, so at least the quality of the remaining wines did not suffer from the very short yields. Monsieur Bessin is one of the very finest winemakers in all of Chablis these days, and he has made customarily superb wines in 2012.

2012 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The 2012 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes” from Jean-Claude Bessin is really a lovely wine on both the nose and palate, offering up a deep and vibrant bouquet of green apple, lime, a touch of orange, very refined minerality and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very solid at the core, with lovely bounce and focus, excellent structure and a lovely vein of complex minerality running down the spine of the lovely fruit on the long and zesty

finish. This will age very well, but will also drink with great style right from the outset. 2014-2025+. **90.**

2012 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

As I have mentioned for the last couple of years, the vines for Monsieur Bessin’s Montmains bottling actually lie in the vineyard of La Forêt, but are bottled on their own as Montmains, rather than included in his cuvée of La Forêt, as they are in a completely different section of the vineyard and Monsieur Bessin finds the two *terroirs* quite singular and would not dream of blending them together. Happily, there was no hail here in Forest, so both the Montmains and the La Forêt are excellent in 2012. The Montmains delivers a deep and truly stunning nose of lime, tangerine, a potpourri of citrus blossoms, flinty minerality and a delicate framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and impeccably balanced, with superb mid-palate depth, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the focused and vibrant finish. This too will drink with great style right from the outset, but should also age long and gracefully. 2014-2030+. **92.**

2012 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

With all of the old vines blended in here to make a viable cuvée, the 2012 Bessin Fourchaume is really special. The wine offers up superb depth and aromatic precision in its mélange of apple, tangerine, a touch of the gentle “woodsiness” that I associate with this vineyard’s *terroir*, gorgeous, stony minerality, orange peel and a lovely, discreet topnote of smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant on the attack, with gorgeous fruit on the attack, a rock solid core, vibrant acids and great backend mineral drive on the very long and complex finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Fourchaume! 2015-2035. **93.**

2012 Chablis “La Forêt”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

As Monsieur Bessin observed, the 2012 La Forêt “is classic Rive Gauche” in this vintage, jumping from the glass in a gorgeous and zesty nose of lime, tangerine, white flowers, chalky soil tones, a delicate framing of vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is superb, with its full-bodied and perfectly focused format offering a lovely sense of reserve on the attack, a great core, snappy acids and stunning backend cut and minerality on the very long, zesty and laser-like finish. Another *tour de force* from Monsieur Bessin in 2012! I would give this wine at least a couple of years in the cellar to really let it blossom, though it is so perfectly balanced that it will probably be very hard to resist right from the start. 2016-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

It is really a shame that Valmur was further devastated by May hail, as the tiny quantity of bottles that will be available of this great wine will make it exceedingly hard to find in the marketplace. The young and absolutely superb bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, sweet, pink grapefruit, tangerine, crystalline minerality, white flowers and incipient notes of beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very minerally in personality, with brisk acids, outstanding focus and balance and a very, very long, laser-like finish. This is a great bottle of Valmur in the making. 2018-2040+. **95.**

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat (Chablis)

I did not arrive at a perfect moment to taste the 2012 wines from Vincent Dauvissat and his children, as the wines seemed to be generally in a very laid back and accessible stage that made them almost too easy to taste- not to mention hard to spit at the end of a long day of tasting on my birthday! I have to believe that there is even more structure and cut here than was in

evidence at the time of my visit, but I should note that Monsieur Dauvissat started his harvest a few days later than folks like the Raveneaus, as he began picking on September 24th, and perhaps the rains of the 25th and 26th have something to do with the more accessible side of the wines on display at the time of my visit. This is not to say that this is an undesirable characteristic by any means, but given the structural fireworks on display at Domaines Raveneau and William Fèvre earlier in the day, I was hoping for just a bit more cut and sizzle here chez Dauvissat. The 2012 Séchet had just been assembled for bottling earlier in the day and was not available for tasting, but the remainder of the lineup was very, very good and fairly forward stylistically, with the wines likely to be absolutely delicious to drink out of the blocks. They reminded me quite a bit of the stellar 1995s here, which I cellared and drank with wild abandon back in the old days and I cannot imagine that anyone will be disappointed with a bottle of 2012 Chablis from any of the crus cultivated by Monsieur Dauvissat and family. For the record, I did dutifully spit the entire range (and the three older vintages offered up after the tasting, including an absolutely stellar bottle of 1990 La Forest) and then repaired back to the Hostellerie de Clos for dinner and a proper bottle of the 2007 Dauvissat Les Preuses- which was drinking great.

2012 Petit Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

I tasted the 2012 Petit Chablis from the bottling done in September of 2013 and the wine was showing very well indeed. The nose is a lovely blend of pear, pink grapefruit, lovely minerality and a floral topnote redolent of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and shows off a lovely core of fruit, with crisp acids and fine mineral drive on the long and complex finish. A lovely bottle with plenty of immediate appeal. 2014-2022+. **89.**

2012 Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Some of the 2012 Chablis AC was still in barrel at the time of my late November visit and we happily tasted this wine from barrel. The wine is more closed on the nose than the Petit Chablis, but offers up scents of grapefruit, tart orange, flinty minerality and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a nice sense of reserve on the attack, with a succulent core and very good backend minerality and grip on the long and classy finish. This too will drink well from the outset, but possesses such lovely balance that it should also age very well indeed. 2014-2030. **90+.**

2012 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2012 Vaillons from Domaine Dauvissat is a quite forward in personality, but certainly not short of complexity or precision. The really lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of tangerine, sweet grapefruit, chalky minerality, citrus zest, spring flowers and a hint of the beeswax to come. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite succulent on the attack, with a good core, crisp acids and lovely cut and grip on the more overtly mineral finish. I suspect that this wine will become more defined by its minerality as the gorgeous, puppy fat fruit recedes a bit with bottle age, and the wine is certainly beautifully balanced and likely to age long and gracefully. 2014-2035. **91+.**

2012 Chablis “La Forest”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2012 La Forest from Vincent Dauvissat is quite similar in structure to the Vaillons, with impressive complexity on both the nose and palate, but with the wine quite wide open out of the blocks and already drinking with great style. The refined and complex nose delivers scents of lime, pear, a dollop of orange, beeswax, flinty soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, broad and juicy, with a fine core of fruit, very good, framing acids and excellent length and grip on the wide open and complex finish. The acids seem pretty

laid back here on the attack, but the backend is long and racy. Good juice that will drink very well right out of the blocks. 2014-2035+. **92.**

2012 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Like the premier crus *chez* Dauvissat, the 2012 Les Preuses offers up exemplary aromatic and flavor complexity, but seems just a touch *tendre* out of the blocks by the very, very high standards of this flagship bottling. The bouquet is gorgeously complex, delivering notes of pink grapefruit, lemon, spring flowers, beeswax and a marvelous base of chalky, oyster shell soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and perfectly balanced, with a fine core, lovely, framing acids and fine focus on the very long and succulent finish. I suspect that there is more structure here than currently meets the eye, but today the wine gives the impression of a wonderfully complex Preuses for relatively early drinking. 2016-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Again, the 2012 Dauvissat Les Clos offers up uncharacteristically early appeal- or at least, this is the impression it gives off today. There is no denying the superb complexity of the bouquet, which jumps from the glass in a mix of pear, tangerine, very complex, flinty minerality, a touch of smokiness, spring flowers and orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very elegant, with a sound core, good, but not great cut and grip and a very long, suave and complex finish. This is a lovely bottle, but without quite the grip and sizzle of the very best grand crus that I tasted on this trip to Chablis- though this could just be a passing phase where the gorgeous and very pure fruit simply has enveloped the overt structural elements for the time being! 2017-2035+. **94.**

Domaine William Fèvre (Chablis)

Managing Director, Didier Séguier has done a magical job at this estate since taking over and his 2012s look likely to be the very finest wines produced yet at Domaine William Fèvre since its purchase by Joseph Henriot back in 1998. Monsieur Séguier and his team acted decisively to guard the natural acidity in their 2012s, beginning harvesting on September 20th and ending up with the same general level of acidity in their 2012s as they had for their racy 2010s and 2007s. The yields were between thirty and thirty-two hectoliters per hectare for their grand crus in 2012 and in the thirty-five to forty hectoliter per hectare range for their premier crus, so the wines have ended up as snappy as the 2010s, but with even more mid-palate stuffing. The wines were in varying stages of their evolution at the time of my November 21st visit, with several having already been bottled, while others were assembled in tanks and in preparation for bottling, but everything was showing marvelously well! The village wines had been bottled in June, the premier crus were begun in September and a few had just been bottled the week before my visit, and a few of the grand crus were in the process of being bottled that week. Obviously not an ideal time to be tasting, but the wines were just shining at the time and I can only imagine how stunning the best of the 2012 Domaine William Fèvre wines will be a year or two from now, once they have really gotten a little distance out from their bottling. Given that this domaine has switched its entire production to bottling under Diams, it seems likely that this is one estate that can now be expected to have its wines age like white Burgundy used to back in the good old days before premo. This is truly an amazing range of stellar 2012 Chablis!

2012 Chablis “Champs Royaux”- Maison William Fèvre

The 2012 Champs Royaux, which is the *villages* level bottling made from a combination of purchased and estate-grown fruit, had been bottled in June of 2013 and was showing very well

at the time of my visit. The bouquet is a lovely blend of green apple, orange, chalky soil tones and a nice touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and wide open in style, with a good core and focus and a long, vibrant finish that closes with good snap and grip. This is really a very good bottle of Chablis AC for near-term drinking. 2014-2024. **88.**

2012 Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Domaine William Fèvre Chablis AC (all domaine-grown fruit) was also bottled in June and was also in very good form in November. The wine is deeper and more complex than the Champs Royaux bottling, as it wafts from the glass in a serious nose of apple, pear, a touch of grapefruit, excellent, flinty minerality and a floral topnote of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really shows lovely succulence on the attack, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and a long, crisp and complex finish. Classy *villages*! 2014-2025+. **89+.**



Managing Director at Domaine William Fèvre, Didier Séguier, with his amazing lineup.

2012 Chablis “Beauroy”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Beauroy had been bottled in September and was showing very well, offering up a deep and vibrant bouquet of lime, tangerine, smoky tones, superb minerality and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant in profile, with crisp acids, a very good core and excellent length and grip on the focused and zesty finish. A lovely premier cru for near-term drinking. 2014-2030. **90.**

2012 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Montmains had been filtered in tank the week before my visit, and was scheduled for bottling the week following. The majority of the fruit for this bottling hails from Butteaux. The wine offers up a deep and very classy nose of green apple, lime, orange, a superb base of flinty minerality, lime blossoms and a nice touch of ocean breeze in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and balance and a very long, mineral and racy backend. Fine juice. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine William Fèvre

The domaine’s parcel in the premier cru of Vaillons has been farmed under *biodynamique* principals since 2006, and the 2012 was showing very well at the time of my visit, despite having been bottled only the week before! The very pretty nose wafts from the glass in a classy blend of apple, pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones, white flowers, orange zest and a nice touch of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure, with a gorgeous core of fruit, bright acids, superb focus and cut and a very long, poised and snappy finish. Another stellar 2012 Premier Cru. 2017-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chablis “Les Lys”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Les Lys had been bottled in the end of September and was really singing in November. This is produced from fifty to sixty year-old vines, with one section planted on a very, very stony portion of the vineyard, and the resulting wine in 2012 shows great mineral cut and reserve for the vintage. The excellent bouquet is a blend of green apple, pink grapefruit, a complex base of chalky minerality, spring flowers and a vibrant topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core, excellent backend mineral drive, great cut and balance and a very long, youthfully snappy and well-balanced finish. This will need a bit of bottle age, but it is going to be a terrific bottle. 2018-2040. **93+**.

2012 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine William Fèvre

For the last few years, the William Fèvre Fourchaume has been produced by a blend of purchased and domaine fruit, hailing not only from Fourchaume proper, but also from l’Homme Mort and Vaulorent. This year, the wine is entirely from domaine-grown fruit and has been produced exclusively from the younger vines in the estate’s parcel of Vaulorent. The wine had only been bottled the week before I arrived, but offers up an excellent bouquet of apple, lime, pink grapefruit, complex minerality and a nice topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with outstanding transparency, crisp acids and lovely backend precision and minerality on the long and zesty finish. Lovely juice and perhaps a bit more refined this year, as it relies solely on fruit from the great, great premier cru of Vaulorent. 2017-2035. **93**.

2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Montée de Tonnerre from Domaine William Fèvre had also just been bottled the week before my visit, but this is clearly a great wine in the making and probably the finest example of this vineyard I have ever had the pleasure to taste from the estate. The wine is deep and very, very complex on both the nose and palate, offering up a classic mélange of green apple, pear, lime, flinty minerality, white flowers and a dollop of citrus oil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure and vibrant, with a great core of fruit, brisk acids, laser-like focus and stunning length and grip on the focused and racy finish. Great juice. 2020-2040+. **94+**.

2012 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Vaulorent was still in tank and waiting for next week’s bottling, so I had the extreme good fortune to catch this brilliant wine at an ideal moment for tasting. The stunning nose soars from the glass in an aromatic constellation of apple, pear, tangerine, a very complex base of flinty minerality (that recalls Les Clos more than a bit!), lime and orange blossoms and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with stunning transparency, a rock solid core, grand cru dimension, racy acids and simply stunning length and grip on the endless and snappy finish. This is a great, great bottle of Chablis! 2020-2050. **95.**

2012 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Bougros had been bottled all of three days prior to my visit, but probably had not yet begun to shut down after its *mise* and it was very easy to appreciate how special this vintage is for this wine at the domaine. The superb bouquet is a blend of pear, orange, lime, flinty soil tones, beeswax and a topnote of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully structured, with a great core of fruit, laser-like focus and a very, very long, crisp and utterly seamless finish. This is by a good margin the greatest example of the “straight” Bougros that I have tasted from Domaine William Fèvre! 2020-2050. **95.**

2012 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine William Fèvre

Vaudésir is one of the warmest vineyards in all of Chablis, and the domaine typically picks their fruit here seven to ten days ahead of the other grand crus, and this was the vineyard with which they began their harvest in 2012 in order to protect its potential acidity. The wine has turned out beautifully, as it offers up a deep and very floral nose of both orange and apple blossoms, pear, lime, a complex base of chalky soil tones and a nice touch of smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with racy acids, excellent complexity, a rock solid core and a very long, racy and supremely elegant finish. A stunning vintage of Vaudésir. 2020-2050. **95.**

2012 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine William Fèvre

As I noted in the introduction, the vineyard of Valmur was hailed on in 2012 and the domaine only produced eighteen hectoliters per hectare here in this vintage. The wine was still resting in tank and was to be bottled the week after my visit, so it was absolutely singing. The deep and brilliantly precise nose soars from the glass in a mélange of green apple, tangerine, lime, complex, crystalline and very flinty minerality and a topnote of lime zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with stunning focus and balance, great cut and grip and a very, very long and extremely mineral finish. A brilliant wine! 2022-2060. **97.**

2012 Chablis “Bougros- Côte de Bouguerots”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 Côte de Bouguerots is equally stunning, as it offers up a pure and very complex bouquet of pear, apple, tangerine, complex, very chalky minerality, citrus blossoms and incipient smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very soil-driven in personality, with great mid-palate depth, vibrant acids and outstanding length and grip on the racy and classic finish. This will drink a little sooner than the Valmur and last every bit as long! 2020-2060. **97.**

2012 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2012 les Preuses from Domaine William Fèvre is another absolute monument to the vintage, as it delivers a brilliant aromatic constellation of pink grapefruit, pear, tangerine, lemon blossoms, lime zest, oyster shell and every conceivable variation on the theme of chalky minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with a

great core of fruit and stunning length and grip on the racy and completely transparent finish. This wine possesses simply gorgeous fruit and floral tones, but it is absolutely defined by its magical minerality! 2022-2060. **97+**.

2012 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine William Fèvre

Domaine William Fèvre’s 2012 les Clos also came from very small yields this year, as the crop was only twenty-two hectoliters per hectare, making this the smallest crop after the Valmur (with which it shared hail damage). The wine has turned out stunningly beautiful, soaring from the glass in a complex blend of green apple, orange, pear, kaleidoscopic, flinty minerality, citrus zest, white flowers and smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very racy, with a rock solid core, stunning backend mineral drive and a very, very long, seamless and electric finish. A stunning wine! 2022-2065. **98**.

Domaine Louis Michel et Fils (Chablis)

Guillaume Gicqueau-Michel has produced outstanding examples of the 2012 vintage, and this year will vie with the stunning 2010s here as the finest yet crafted by the new generation at Louis Michel et Fils. Yields were down seventeen percent in 2012 from the already short crop of 2010 here, and as is customary at Domaine Michel, several cuvées had already been bottled at the time of my late November visit. Bottling of the 2012s started here in September- prior to the start of the late harvest of 2013, and the Petit Chablis (which I did not taste on this visit), Chablis villages and several of the premier crus were already bottled, while others were assembled and waiting in tank for bottling over the coming weeks. Most of the grand crus will not be bottled until early next year. The switch a few vintages back to using entirely indigenous yeasts here has certainly paid dividends, and it is hard not to argue that Domaine Michel is currently producing the very finest wines in its long and illustrious history. It is too bad that a few of their importers (including the American) are still requesting the Petit Chablis and Chablis AC to be bottled under screwcap, as it really is a waste of those wines and probably is hurting the domaine’s reputation in the long run amongst up and coming Louis Michel fans, as those bottlings are generally sold to the least sophisticated consumers and they are going to be hard-pressed to recognize whether or not a screwcapped bottle is suffering from reduction- though they will certainly have no difficulties deciding that they do not like the wine if it happens to be badly reduced! Importers and estates that bottle their entry level wines under screwcap are certainly playing with fire, as they face the possibility of alienating their next generation of customers by not treating their entry level bottlings with the same care as the top premier and grand crus. Given that agglomerated corks are so widely available and sell at virtually the same price as screwcaps (lower costs have always been an important reason estates and importers push for screwcaps- everything else is just window dressing IMO) with zero possibility of TCA taint or reduction, so it seems illogical to me to still see importers and producers opting for the screw. But, be that as it may, amongst the premier crus, only the Montmains has had to undergo the ignominy of being bottled under screwcap (for a couple of markets as a special request), so the vast majority of the Louis Michel range is safe. And, these 2012s are going to be worth a special search of the market, as Guillaume Gicqueau-Michel has certainly made the most of his opportunities in this vintage and made absolutely stellar 2012s. I have added a “plus sign” and a question mark to the scores of the wines that were only bottled a couple weeks prior to my visit, as it seems likely that my score may end up being a bit conservative for those wines tasted so soon after the mise. The order of the premier crus below is based on the order we tasted the wines, as we decided to taste all of the bottled premier crus before tasting the ones that were still

in tank, which is the reason the notes on the finest two premier crus in the range- Vaulorent and Montée de Tonnerre appear ahead of wines such as the Forêts and Séchet.

2012 Chablis- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Louis Michel Chablis *villages* was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up scents of green apple, grapefruit, chalky soil, a touch of straw and a nice topnote of oyster shell. On the palate the wine is medium-full, fresh and bright, with a good core, crisp acids and really pretty good length and grip on the focused finish. A lovely example. 2014-2030+. **89.**

2012 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Montmains from Domaine Michel had only been bottled two weeks prior to my visit, so the wine may be even better than it was showing at that time. The bouquet is bright and elegant, offering up a blend of grapefruit, lemon, chalk, a touch of wet stone and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and absolutely classic in size and shape, with lovely focus and cut, zesty acids and fine length and grip on the very well-balanced and intense finish. Fine juice. 2016-2035. **90+?**

2012 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Butteaux had also just been bottled two week before I arrived, so my score here is also probably a bit on the conservative side. The bouquet is really very pretty and expressive, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, tangerine, a lovely base of soil tones, straw and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and sports a lovely core, with fine focus and nascent complexity, excellent balance and a long, classy finish. Another lovely premier cru. 2016-2035+. **91+?**

2012 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Vaillons from Domaine Michel had also just been bottled two weeks ago, but was showing off lovely elegance and nascent complexity in its bouquet of lemon, green apple, a refined base of oyster shell, white flowers and chalky overtones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and delivers excellent mid-palate depth, with superb focus and cut, seamless balance and lovely grip on the long and youthfully complex finish. This will be another absolutely superb premier cru. 2016-2035. **92+?**

2012 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

I am happy that Guillaume Gicqueau-Michel has decided to label this wine under its correct name of Vaulorent in most markets (the wine always used to be sold under Fourchaume, but now only a few importers request this label for the wine, which has always been one hundred percent Vaulorent), as it is an absolutely stellar example of this great *terroir*. (Please note that there is no straight Fourchaume produced by the domaine, so if you happen to see a bottle of Louis Michel et Fils “Fourchaume” on a wine list or at your local merchant, it is indeed the Vaulorent under its old label.) This wine was showing beautifully, despite it also having just been bottled, as it soars from the glass in a complex mélange of green apple, pink grapefruit, a touch of clementine, a great base of flinty minerality and a nice touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent acidity and fine focus and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. This is going to be a stellar bottle of premier cru in the years to come. 2016-2035. **92+?**

2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Domaine Michel’s 2012 Montée de Tonnerre is outstanding, and despite just having been bottled two week before I tasted it, its great potential was self-evident. The complex and vibrant

nose offers up a superb mix of lemon, green apple, chalky minerality, a bit of wet stone, smoke and a fine topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very racy, with a rock solid core, excellent focus and balance, lovely, nascent complexity and great mineral drive on the backend of the very long and snappy finish. High class juice! 2017-2040. **93+?**

2012 Chablis “Forêts”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Chablis “Forêts” was still in tank, and showed great vibrancy on both the nose and palate (and it was this quality that makes me think that I have probably not been totally just with the premier crus that had just been bottled and expect all of them to perhaps move up a bit in score once they have fully recovered from the *mise*.) In any case, the 2012 Forêts delivers a superb bouquet of green apple, sweet grapefruit, flinty minerality, white flowers and a touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and absolutely vivid to the core, with great focus and grip, snappy acids and outstanding balance on the very long and classy finish. 2015-2035. **92.**

2012 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Louis Michel Séchet is probably the most fruit-driven of all of these premier crus, but this does not mean that it is short on minerality- just really generous with its beautiful fruit tones. The fine bouquet is a blend of lime, orange, white flowers, gentle, chalky minerality and a nice touch of straw up high. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent, with a lovely core, a very wide open personality, bright acids and a very long, focused and delicious finish. It will be no crime to drink this lovely bottle early on in its evolution, but it is very poised on the palate and should also age long and gracefully as well. 2015-2030+. **91+.**

2012 Chablis “Butteaux” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Butteaux Vieilles Vignes was still in tank as well and was absolutely singing at the time of my visit, soaring from the glass in a complex and vibrant aromatic blend of green apple, tart orange, a very complex base of flinty soil tones, smoke, lemongrass and a nice, youthful topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and simply beautifully balanced, with a rock solid core, excellent focus and grip, brisk acids and a very, very long and racy finish. High class juice! 2017-2035+. **94.**

2012 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Vaudésir from Domaine Louis Michel et Fils is a stellar example of the vintage, delivering a deep and youthfully complex bouquet of grapefruit, lemon, green apple, flinty minerality, orange peel, citrus blossoms and a topnote of lemon grass. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with kaleidoscopic minerality, snappy acids and excellent focus and grip on the very long and well-balanced finish. A classic in the making. 2018-2050. **95+.**

2012 Chablis “Grenouilles”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2012 Grenouilles from Domaine Michel may well be the finest example of this grand cru I have ever tasted from the estate. The bouquet is very deep and still very primary, offering up scents of lemon, pink grapefruit, apple, again, very flinty minerality, white flowers and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully structured, with a more reserved personality than the Vaudésir, a rock solid core, brisk acids and outstanding length and grip on the very, very long and transparent finish. 2020-2050. **96.**

2012 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

In contrast to the other two grand crus in the Louis Michel cellars, the 2012 Clos was quite grumpy at the time of my visit, as the wine was a bit reduced and not particularly pleased to be disturbed. Nevertheless, it was quite clear that this will be a superb example of the vintage.

The bouquet reluctantly offers up scents of green apple, grapefruit, tart orange, very complex minerality, smoke, citrus zest and white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and absolutely rock solid in the mid-palate, with bracing acids, great mineral drive and stunning length and grip on the perfectly focused finish. This will be a great wine, but give it time. 2020-2050+. **95-96+**.



Guillaume Gicqueau-Michel in the newly refurbished cellars at Domaine Louis Michel et Fils.

Domaine Patrick Piuze (Chablis)

Patrick Piuze and his fine assistant winemaker, Sylvie Quittot, were in a very fine mood at the time of my November visit. The renovations of the old Vocoret cellars continue apace (the electrician was in at the time of my visit), but the redoing of the cellars here is still a work in progress and may be finally finished up by the time of my next visit. However, the continued work in the cellars had prompted them to clean out an old bottle cellar left behind by the Vocorets, so they had just opened a bottle a couple of days before of a Vocoret grand cru from the '60s (I forget now which cru- Valmur perhaps- and which vintage,) and they were still basking in the afterglow of that great old bottle. After a couple of vintages of experimentation with basket presses versus pneumatic presses for certain lots of wines, Patrick and Sylvie have come to the conclusion that the wines are superior with the old basket presses and have made their entire 2012 and 2013 vintages using exclusively their basket presses. They are so convinced of the superiority of this method of pressing that they have sold their pneumatic press (sparking

rumors in Chablis of financial distress here ☺) and are looking forward to following how the wines develop in future years with this traditional pressing system. Readers should keep in mind that perhaps the last person to give up his basket press in the Côte de Beaune was Jean-François Coche, so this is not a Quixotic experiment on the part of Pat and Sylvie. I had a chance to participate in one of their tastings last year of blind tasting a few crus made with each type of press, and in each case, I found the basket press-made wine to have a notable superiority in the expression of its underlying terroir than the bottling made using the pneumatic press. Whether or not using the basket press (and its far more oxidative initial pressing) will help fight premature oxidation of the wines in the future remains to be seen, but Patrick and Sylvie are one of a growing number of white Burgundy producers who believe that some early exposure of the must to oxygen may well prove to be a key to solving the problem of premoxy, as it allows for many compounds prone to oxidation to bond with oxygen molecules early on and precipitate out of solution right at the outset.

The entire range of 2012s had been already bottled at the time of my visit, as Patrick observed that the balance of the wines was so good in the barrels that there was no reason to wait, and most had been bottled while waiting for the late harvest of 2013 to commence. Patrick had started picking on September 20th of 2012 and brought all of his grapes in prior to the rainy days of the 25th and 26th, with the highest acidity levels at the domaine since their superb 2008s. Needless to say, Patrick and Sylvie did not contribute to the sales figures of tartaric acid in the region in this vintage. This is an absolutely superb range of 2012 Chablis and it was one of my highlights of the entire Burgundy trip to taste through these outstanding young Chablis with Patrick and Sylvie. I get the sense when visiting Chablis every six months that the tightly-knit winegrowing community of Chablis has not really taken too briskly to Domaine Patrick Piuze, and I was a bit surprised that many of their colleagues in Chablis do not seem to really appreciate just how important this new domaine is to the reputation of Chablis these days in the wider world of wine. I may be off base here, but it seemed to me that of the many vignerons with whom I spoke with on this stopover in Chablis, only Vincent Dauvissat really has taken warmly to Patrick and Sylvie's enterprise, with many other comments falling into the category of "grudging respect" rather than true admiration for the wines of Domaine Piuze. This is too bad, for it seems to me that what Patrick Piuze and Sylvie Quittot have accomplished in the short span of vintages since they have set up on their own is perhaps the most important event in the firmament of Chablis since Joseph Henriot purchased Domaine William Fèvre and set up this estate as an absolute monument to the excellence of traditionally-styled Chablis, and it would be nice to see Patrick and Sylvie embraced for their passionate commitment to the region, rather than still treated a bit as outsiders. With Patrick Piuze being originally from Montréal, Quebec, and then arriving first in the region working with Jean-Marie Guffens of Verget (who always had his grapes purchased in the region trucked down to the Verget cellars in the Mâcon), I suppose it is not surprising that he is still perhaps viewed as an outsider here, but when one speaks with him about the wines and vineyards of Chablis, it is so easy to appreciate his deep love for this region- not to mention taste it in the glass- that it seems pretty clear to me that this is a man whose passion for the wines of Chablis is bottomless and true and it would be nice to see the domaine more warmly integrated into the firmament of winegrowing in the region one of these days.

2012 Petit Chablis- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze picks all of his grapes by hand, including his Petit Chablis, and this helps produce one of the best examples one can find in the region. This wine hails from two parcels, with three-quarters of the cuvée hailing from a parcel called *Sous Les Clos* and the other from *La Petit Preuses*, with the former just below the grand cru vineyard of the same name and the other up above its own grand cru namesake- pretty good real estate! The 2012 version is excellent, offering up a very pretty blend of lemon, apple, a fine base of flinty soil tones and a bright topnote of lime zest. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and beautifully focused, with a good core, lovely purity and fine length and grip on the zesty finish. A lovely bottle. 2014-2020. **88.**

2012 Chablis “Terroir de Chichée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

As I noted last year, the Terroir de Chichée bottling is produced primarily from forty-three year-old vines on hard chalky soils, with about twenty percent of the cuvée coming from a plot of sixty-six year-old vines. The 2012 is really a pretty bottle of *villages* level Chablis for near-term drinking, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, tangerine, beeswax, white flowers, chalk and citrus zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and complex, with a good core, crisp acids and lovely focus and grip on the wide open and succulent finish. Fine juice. 2014-2025. **89+.**

2012 Chablis “Terroir de Decouverte”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Last year was the first vintage for this new Chablis *villages* bottling from Patrick Piuze, with the vines for this superb village wine coming from a vineyard right next door to the great premier cru vineyard of Vaulorent. The 2012 Decouverte AC is a bit more reserved structurally than the preceding *villages* bottlings, but it shows outstanding potential in its aromatic blend of apple, lemon, a touch of grapefruit, flinty minerality and a gently smoky topnote. ON the palate the wine is pure, fullish and tightly-knit, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and very good cut and grip on the long and beautifully focused finish. This is a superb bottle of Chablis AC that very nicely combines the pure and succulent fruit of the vintage with classic raciness and mineral drive. 2014-2024. **89+.**

2012 Chablis “Terroir de Chablis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

I could not remember quite where this parcel of vines was located when I was tasting the wine in the cellars, but my tasting note starts out with “very La Forêt-like on the nose.” Checking back on my notes from last year, I see why this is so, as this AC hails from relatively old vines from a *lieu à dit* next door to La Forêt. The 2012 version offers up a lovely bouquet of apple, tangerine, citrus blossoms, chalky soil tones and a lovely topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and juicy on the attack, with a fine core, lovely complexity, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. High class juice here. 2014-2024+. **90.**

2012 Chablis “Terroir de Courgis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

As I have noted in the past, the Terroir de Courgis bottling hails from fifty-plus year-old vines in the village of Préhy, near to Domaine Jean-Marc Brocard, and this is the most structured and probably the deepest of the five excellent *villages* bottlings from Domaine Piuze in 2012. The bouquet is a bit more reserved than the above, but deep and nascently complex in its mélange of apple, pear, lemon zest, lovely, flinty minerality and upper end smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and will be quite complex when it blossoms, with a fine core, excellent focus and balance, very good acidity and superb length and grip on the still fairly youthful finish. Of all of these fine 2012 *villages* bottlings, this is one I would tuck away for a year or two before broaching. 2016-2030. **91.**

2012 Chablis “Terroir de Fyé”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Chablis “Terroir de Fyé” bottling from Domaine Patrick Piuze all hails from vineyards that surround Montée de Tonnerre, and the 2012 was half barrel-fermented and half raised in stainless steel tank. The wine is broader and deeper than the Terroir de Courgis bottling, wafting from the glass in a superb nose of pear, lemon, lovely, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine cut and grip, excellent focus and a very long, zesty and still fairly primary finish. Despite this wine having a bit more puppy fat out of the block than the above wine, this too is fairly young and a year or two in the cellar prior to opening will pay very nice dividends. Fine juice. 2016-2030. **90+**.

2012 Chablis “Vaillons” Les Minots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The seventy-plus year-old vines in this section of Vaillons that Patrick Piuze had farmed here were replanted after the 2011 vintage, as they were now so old and feeble that they were not economically viable for the producer. Consequently, the 2012 version is not quite as rock solid as the core as it was in the past, but it is still an excellent wine and some of the lost intensity that was brought to this cuvée has been compensated for by the low yields of the vintage. This is the warmest section of Vaillons, so the wine is quite succulent and wide open out of the blocks in 2012, offering up a superb bouquet of lemon, orange, a complex, chalky base of soil, citrus zest and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite juicy on the attack, with a fine core, crisp acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and superb finish. This is a forward and outstanding example of the vintage. 2014-2035+. **92**.

2012 Chablis “La Forêt”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The parcel of vines that Patrick Piuze farms in La Forêt are further down in the valley than those of Vincent Dauvissat, which are up at the very top of the sweeping hillside, so the wine offers up a bit more early generosity from its more sheltered location. The 2012 is a beautiful bottle in the making, wafting from the glass in a classic aromatic blend of pear, lemon, chalky minerality, apple blossoms, beeswax and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a juicy core, crisp acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and classy finish. Another stellar premier cru, but give this one a few years in the cellar to fully blossom. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The insanely low yields of 2012 can really be sensed in the Piuze bottling of Butteaux, which shows an impressive intensity on the backend that it seems almost tannic. As folks may recall, this parcel of vines lies right next to those of the Raveneau family, and the 2012 Butteaux is really fine this year, offering up a deep and complex nose of lemon, tangerine, chalky soil tones, lemon blossoms and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent acidity and grip, laser-like focus and great grip on the very long and classic finish. Butteaux is a warm *terroir*, but the cut and snap here are absolutely stellar. 2016-2040. **93+**.

2012 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

2012 will be the last year of a Fourchaume bottling from Patrick and Sylvie, as they have observed that “of all the wines we produce, the Fourchaume always seems like the bottle we never take home to have for dinner, and why produce a wine if we are not drinking it ourselves?” The last vintage of Piuze Fourchaume is outstanding in 2012, as one-third of the blend here hails from Vaulorent, with the remainder originating from Fourchaume proper. The bouquet shows off lovely minerality in its blend of apple, tangerine, a touch of the vineyard’s “woodsiness”, fine

minerality and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very elegant out of the blocks, with a lovely core, crisp acids and a long, focused and wide open finish. A fine, fine bottle of Fourchaume. 2014-2030+. **92.**

2012 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

A straight Vaulorent bottling is new to the lineup at Domaine Piuze, and it is a most welcome addition, as this is clearly one of the greatest *terroirs* in all of Chablis and Patrick and Sylvie have perfectly captured the magical quality of this vineyard in their 2012 rendition. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a mix of tangerine, lemon, pear, very complex, flinty minerality, incipient notes of beeswax and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved structurally, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent focus and grip and a very long, racy and soil-driven finish. Clearly of grand cru quality and a dynamite wine. 2017-2035+. **94+.**

2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre” from Domaine Patrick Piuze is another absolutely stellar premier cru in this vintage, offering up a deep, complex and very vibrant bouquet of lemon, tangerine, citrus blossoms and a beautifully complex and almost crystalline base of minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly open on the attack, with a rock solid core, crisp, ripe acids and outstanding length and grip on the pure and racy finish. This is very, very Raveneau-like in terms of aromatics and flavors and a *tour de force*. 2015-2035. **94.**

2012 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze’s 2012 Bougros is a lovely wine, offering up a pure and succulent personality of great breed and refinement. The complex and wide open bouquet offers up scents of pear, lemon, a fine spread of chalky soil tones, beeswax, lemon blossoms and a faint touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and classy, with more obvious complexity out of the blocks than the lovely Montée de Tonnerre this year, crisp acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and suave finish. This is totally delicious to drink today, but I would try hard to give it at least a couple of years in the cellar to allow its secondary layers of complexity to emerge. 2016-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Chablis “Côte de Bouquereaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2012 Côte de Bouquereaux is a great wine in the making, soaring from the glass in an aromatic constellation of apple, lemon, pear, paraffin, very complex, chalky minerality, spring flowers, gentle notes of vanillin oak and a vibrant topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very, very mineral-driven, with a rock solid core, great focus and grip, crisp acids and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced and racy finish. I love this wine this year! 2018-2040+. **95.**

2012 Chablis “Blanchots”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

This is the best Blanchots I can recall tasting from Pat Piuze, as the wine offers up stunning purity and depth on both the nose and palate. The superb bouquet is a blend of lemon blossoms, apple, pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones, incipient notes of paraffin and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with laser-like focus, seamless balance, zesty acids and simply superb length and grip on the complex and stunning finish. A great wine. 2018-2040+. **95+.**

2012 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Not surprisingly, the 2012 Valmur *chez* Piuze is also outstanding, soaring from the glass in a complex and vibrant mélange of apple, pear, lemon, a very deep and complex base of chalky

soil tones, lemon zest and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and chiseled on the attack, with a great core, outstanding focus and balance and a very, very long, primary and oh, so promising finish. This will be a legendary example of the 2012 Chablis vintage! 2018-2040+. **95+**.

2012 Chablis “Les Preuses”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Normally, one tastes the Les Preuses last in the Piuze cellars, but this year, the place of honor was reserved for the Les Clos. This is not to say that the Preuses is not absolutely stellar in 2012, but it has been nosed out by the Les Clos in this vintage. The bouquet on the 2012 Preuses is a very complex and compelling mix of lemon, pear, pink grapefruit, kaleidoscopic, chalky minerality, beeswax, orange zest, smoke and a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very complex, with a rock solid core, crisp acids, stunning focus and grip and a very, very long, racy and nascently complex finish. Another monument to the 2012 vintage. 2018-2045. **97**.

2012 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze joked that the Les Clos was pretty reductive for quite a while in barrel and it was only a judicious decision to rack championed by Sylvie Quittot that allowed this wine to fully reach its potential this year. The wine is absolutely stunning, soaring from the glass in a blend of lemon, pear, tangerine, flinty minerality, oyster shells, citrus zest and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is very pure, laser-like and rock solid at the core, with great mineral definition, brisk acids, flawless focus and balance and stunning grip on the endless and magical finish. A great, great bottle of Les Clos in the making. 2019-2050. **97+**.

Domaine Raveneau (Chablis)

The new and relatively spacious cellars at Domaine Raveneau are completed and are a dramatic change from the two small cellars that the family had used for so many years. Sadly, they were not particularly full at the time of my November visit, as the tiny crops of 2012 and 2013 do not occupy anywhere near as much space as two “normal” sized crops will in the future. Isabelle Raveneau reported that the 2012 crop was down fully fifty percent from a typical good year, and there will be no Chapelots bottling this year, as it was such a tiny crop that the little bit of production here was blended into the Chablis AC cuvée. I cannot remember if the crop in Chapelots fell victim to the spring frosts or the hail of early May. The Raveneaus began harvesting on September 21st of 2012 under ideal conditions- “beautiful weather” according to Mademoiselle Raveneau and she reported that the “grapes were small on the bunches, but were really very fine” and it was clear that this short crop was going to at least produce exceptional quality wines. The wines here are absolutely stellar up and down the appellation hierarchy, with the perception of minerality complexity and cut mounting as one moves up the ladder through the premier and grand crus. All of the wines share the absolutely beautiful fruit tones of the vintage, and I suspect that the village wine and a few of the younger vine premier crus will show even more minerality in their personalities with a bit of bottle age, but today, it is their stunningly pure fruit tones that take center stage. With the top premier crus and grand crus, the superior base of minerality shows right from the outset. The wines across the board are outstanding, with great depth, purity and cut. They seem to have even more mid-palate density than the stellar 2010s here, while still retaining very transparent expressions of their underlying terroir, and these seem likely to be ranked amongst the very greatest vintages chez Raveneau in a generation.

2012 Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Chablis *villages* bottling from the Raveneau family is really excellent- no doubt benefiting from the addition of a bit of Chapelots to the blend. The superb bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, tangerine, flinty minerality, a touch of pink grapefruit and a gentle topnote of smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and fine cut and grip on the impressively mineral and racy finish. A beautiful bottle of Chablis and very clearly of premier cru quality. 2014-2030. **91.**

2012 Chablis “Forêt”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Forêt from Domaine Raveneau is an excellent wine, with a slightly more reserved personality than the *villages* bottling, but with the same purity and precision on both the nose and palate. The fine nose is a blend of green apple, lemon, flinty chalkiness, white flowers, orange peel and a bit of smoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved on the attack, with a good core and superb backend cut, grip and mineral drive. A lovely wine in the making. 2016-2035. **92.**

2012 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Montmains is also outstanding, offering up a complex and vibrant bouquet of tangerine, lemon, apple, chalky minerality, white flowers and incipient notes of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, bright acids and outstanding focus and balance on the very long and zesty finish. While this wine will be very tasty out of the blocks, I would be inclined to try and keep my hands off of this lovely wine for at least a few years and let its secondary layers of complexity emerge with further bottle age. 2017-2035. **92+.**

2012 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Domaine Raveneau Vaillons is absolutely superb, with the perception of early minerality a bit more dramatic than in the Montmains or Forêt. The wine jumps from the glass in a complex and vibrant mélange of pink grapefruit, lemon, a touch of pear, chalky minerality, citrus peel and just a hint of the anise to come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is very pure, complex and full-bodied, with impressive, nascent complexity, outstanding mid-palate depth, snappy acids and great backend mineral drive on the long and focused finish. This is a dynamite vintage of this oft-overlooked, fine premier cru in the Raveneau stables. 2018-2035+. **93.**

2012 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Raveneau

I have always loved the Raveneaus’ Butteaux and the 2012 is going to be another absolutely stellar bottle of Chablis in the years to come. The very precise and vibrant nose delivers a lovely blend of lemon, pink grapefruit, tart orange, simply crystalline minerality, smoke and a fine topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite primary in personality, with a rock solid core, stunning intensity of flavor, laser-like focus and superb cut and grip on the very, very long and primary finish. This will be a great bottle of wine. 2019-2040. **94.**

2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Montée de Tonnerre from Domaine Raveneau is also quite stellar, offering up a deep and primary bouquet of apple, tart orange, very complex, flinty minerality, incipient notes of beeswax, a touch of chalkiness, citrus zest and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthful, with a great core of fruit, impeccable balance, great focus and grip and simply stunning backend minerality on the very, very long and classic finish. What a great wine! 2019-2040+. **95.**

2012 Chablis “Blanchots”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Blanchots from the Raveneau family is a stunning example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a truly superb aromatic constellation of pear, apple, tangerine, spring flowers, a very complex base of chalky soil tones, paraffin and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and utterly refined, with a rock solid core of fruit, snappy acids and superb minerality on the very, very long and unrepentantly elegant finish. I love how mature Raveneau Blanchots often shows a candied lemon quality on both the nose and palate and this is already clearly written in for the future of this great vintage of Blanchots. 2018-2050. **95+.**

2012 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Raveneau

As is customary for this cru, the 2012 Valmur is quite a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the Blanchots, but this too is going to be a legendary example of the vintage in the fullness of time. The stunning nose is a youthful blend of apple, pink grapefruit, tangerine, a great base of minerality, citrus peel, apple blossoms and just a touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and transparent on the attack, with a solid core of fruit, great focus and cut and a very, very long, laser-like and stony finish. Stunning juice. 2020-2050+. **96.**

2012 Chablis “Clos”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2012 Raveneau Clos is a brilliant wine in the making. The very young and very magical nose wafts from the glass in a mix of pink grapefruit, tart orange, kaleidoscopic minerality, flint, a potpourri of citrus zest, hints of the anise to come and plenty of top end smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and absolutely rock solid at the core, with great cut and focus, brisk acids, stunning mineral complexity and drive and a very, very long, youthful and dancing finish. A brilliant wine in the making. 2022-2060. **98.**

Gevrey-Chambertin:

Domaine Denis Bachelet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Denis Bachelet has made beautiful 2012s, though this is hardly news, as he seems to make great wines in every vintage. Yields are very short here due to the bad flowering, which most adversely affected older vines and of which Monsieur Bachelet has a preponderance. For example, there are only three and a half barrels (out of a customary eight) of the old vine Charmes-Chambertin this year, and the new addition of the Evocelles bottling that began in 2011 has been blended into the Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes” in 2012 to try and get enough quantity to make a proper cuvée (and put just a bit more comfort into the impending nightmare of making allocations of the 2012s next spring). The Bachelet cellars are always small, as the production here is never what one might term robust, but they seemed almost too spacious with so few barrels of 2012s sitting here, and the crop load in the 2013 vintage is not going to be any better chez Bachelet. However, the 2012 wines are stunning in their quality and destined to be reference point examples of the vintage, with the gorgeous synthesis of sappy black fruit, great soil signatures and the silky, fine-grained tannins that the very best wines of the this year exude. As I was tasting in the cellars with Monsieur Bachelet, I began to wonder if Gevrey-Chambertin was singled out for especially brilliant wines in this vintage, as everywhere I tasted in Gevrey in November (admittedly, I did pick rather great addresses to start with, but the wines are amazingly and consistently refined structurally and very pure in Gevrey in 2012!) I was utterly smitten with the style of the wines and nearly overwhelmed by their quality. But, there is something very special about a visit with Denis Bachelet each year that transcends the

superb quality of the wines always waiting in barrel in the cellars, as he is indeed one of the nicest gentlemen I have had the pleasure to meet and each visit always seems too short. Happily, on this occasion, we had a chance to sit down with his son and share a glass of 2007 Clos de la Roche from Domaine Rousseau that I happened to have open in the car and it was nice to chat a bit and share an aperitif with Messieurs Bachelet at the end of a long work day for all of us (I think the Bachelets had received four or five tasting delegations prior to my arrival in the early evening of that day, so theirs was no easy day.) It was hard not to reflect while sitting in conversation with Denis and his son that the Bachelet family domaine certainly seems likely to be in very good hands for a long time into the future. Denis was in very good spirits at the time of my visit for another reason as well, as he was headed the following afternoon for a vertical tasting of his brilliant Charmes-Chambertin organized by one of his clients and being held at Becky Wasserman's home. Needless to say, from what I heard back, it was a brilliant afternoon and I would have loved to have been in attendance to sample a wide range of this rare and consistently stunning wine. The early poll results showed that folks who attended were shocked at just how stunning the 2008 was in the lineup- not a surprising result in my book- and that each and every wine showed very well indeed, with the usual proviso that the more structured, younger vintages were properly shut down and bound up in their structural elements. I am sure those at the tasting will have a souvenir that will last them a lifetime!



Gevrey-Chambertin's consummate gentleman, Denis Bachelet, in his cellars.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2012 Domaine Bachelet Bourgogne is a really lovely example that shows off the fine elegance found in this vintage. The deep and very classy nose wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, dark soil tones and a nice touch of coffee bean in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully balanced, with a fine core of fruit, lovely length and focus and a moderately tannic, classy finish. Lovely juice. 2014-2022+. **89.**

2012 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2012 Côte de Nuits Villages from Domaine Denis Bachelet is another classic example of the vintage that shows off very suave structural elements and a fine perfume of sappy fruit and great soil signature. The deep and refined bouquet offers up scents of dark berries, black cherries, grilled meats, a lovely base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a faint touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with lovely focus and soil inflection, fine-grained tannins and impressive length and grip on the superb finish. A very high class wine. 2016-2035. **90+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The addition of the production from the family’s small parcel in Evocelles cannot have hurt this wine any and it is indeed very fine in 2012. The deep and very elegant nose delivers a lovely aromatic constellation of black cherries, cassis, dark chocolate, incipient notes of grilled meat, dark soil tones, coffee bean and a discreet base of vanillin oak. As Monsieur Bachelet pointed out, as this wine sits in the glass, it gets more and more red fruity, with an aroma that he noted as “red currant jellies” that was spot on for the wine. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very velvety in terms of structure, with a very sappy core of fruit, outstanding focus and balance, very suave tannins and superb length and grip on the superb finish. I love the style and shape of this wine this year! 2019-2045. **92+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Corbeaux” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The old vine les Corbeaux was the most reserved 2012 in the cellars this year, but its abundant promise was very easy to appreciate. The pure and very classic nose offers up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, espresso, blossoming notes of grilled meat, black minerality, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off gorgeous mid-palate depth of (again) very sappy fruit, with fine-grained tannins, great focus and grip and a very, very long, primary and oh, so promising finish. This wine was raised in thirty percent new oak in 2012, but the perception is that it has absolutely eaten up its new wood component already in its near bottomless depth of fruit, and if Monsieur Bachelet had told me that he had decided to use all “one wine” barrels for the Corbeaux this year, I would not have been surprised. This is a very special vintage of this always super wine. 2022-2050. **94.**

2012 Charmes-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

I am sorry that the 2012 vintage is not more like the 1999, with great quantity as well as quality, as it saddens me to think how few people are going to be able to taste and cellar this great, great vintage of Bachelet Charmes in the years to come. I suspect that I will not see it again, but that in no way dims the great pleasure I had in tasting this magical young wine in November. The great nose soars from the glass in a youthful blend of black cherries, dark berries, grilled meat, espresso, a beautifully complex base of dark soil tones, coffee bean, woodsmoke and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core of sappy fruit, stunning soil signature, ripe, fine-

grained tannins and stunning length and grip on the brilliant and still quite youthful finish. A great, great wine. 2025-2075. **97.**

Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils (Gevrey-Chambertin)

The 2012 vintage has produced some superb wines from Eric and Jean-Luc Burguet, with the great transparency and purity of fruit very much in evidence across the board in the cellars here. None of the wines in the portfolio had been racked yet at the time of my visit, with the exception of the premier cru Champeaux, which had already been racked once and was in need of a second racking in November, as for some reason, the wine was rather prone to reduction this year. I did not take a proper note on the wine, as it really was very, very cranky, but I did observe that it was very long, very pure and showed off excellent backend energy, so I am sure it will be excellent. All the others were still nurturing on their fine lees and were showing very well indeed. The yields were very low here in 2012, but varied a bit depending on the age of the vines, as the older vines suffered more difficulties during flowering than the slightly younger vines (as was the case at several other estates in this vintage). For example, one of the two new wines in the cellar starting from 2011- the Chambolle-Musigny “Echézeaux”, which normally produces enough for three barrels in a normal vintage was “only” down to two and a half barrels in 2012. Other cuvées chez Burguet were reduced more dramatically. This is a very, very strong set of wines from a domaine that has been at the top of its game for many years now and I enjoy very much seeing the wines get more refined and even more pure with every passing vintage.

2012 Bourgogne “les Pincés Vin”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2012 Bourgogne from Domaine Burguet is very pretty and very red fruity in this vintage. The stylish nose wafts from the glass in a mix of strawberries, cherries, lovely minerality, woodsmoke and a nice dollop of rose petals in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, bright and transparent, with tangy acids, a nice core and very good length and grip on the gently tannic finish. A lovely example. 2014-2020+. **87+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée Symphonie”- Domaine Alain Burguet

The 2012 Cuvée Symphonie was a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but one can see that it is going to be a fine bottle with five or six years’ worth of bottle age. Underneath the bit of reduction is a very pure and classy wine, offering up scents of red and black cherries, blood orange, a fine base of soil tones, gamebirds and a dollop of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with fine, nascent complexity, a lovely core of fruit, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused finish. This will be a fine bottle. 2019-2040. **89-90+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Mes Favorites”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2012 old vine cuvée of Mes Favorites is very, very red fruity this year and just revels in its great purity and sappiness of fruit tones. The very classy nose wafts from the glass in a blend of cherries, pomegranate, *fraises du bois*, beautiful minerality, mustard seed and a nice framing of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely structured, with a very sappy core of fruit, great soil drive on the backend, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is going to be a reference point vintage for this consistently excellent bottling! 2020-2045+. **92+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Echézeaux”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

This is only the second vintage of the Chambolle-Musigny “Echézeaux” from the Burguet brothers, and the wine has turned out beautifully in 2012. I really love the transparency

and the sappy red fruit personality of the wine this year, which is *trés, très* Chambolle. The lovely nose offers up a superb blend of cherries, strawberries, chalky soil tones, a gentle framing of vanillin oak, woodsmoke and a pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and very sappy at the core, with outstanding soil signature, almost silky tannins and superb focus and grip on the very long, complex and bouncy finish. A lovely wine. 2018-2035. **90+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2012 Burguet family's Vosne *villages* has also turned out beautifully this year, offering up a pure and vibrant nose of sappy raspberries, blood orange, Vosne spices, cocoa, a nice base of soil, vanillin oak and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and again, very sappy at the core, with excellent transparency, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. This is another really impressive village wine! 2018-2035+. **91.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée "Rouge Dessus"- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2012 Vosne-Romanée "Rouge Dessus" from the Burguet brothers is stellar and the finest vintage I have yet tasted of this bottling here. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a perfumed mélange of red plums, raspberries, cherries, a great base of soil, cocoa and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very transparent, with superb, nascent complexity, a very sappy core of red fruit, fine-grained tannins and exquisite focus and balance on the very, very long, bright and vibrant finish. Great juice! 2020-2050. **94.**

2012 Chambertin "Clos de Bèze"- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2012 Clos de Bèze from Domaine Burguet is a great wine, offering up all of the purity of fruit, fidelity of *terroir* and structural majesty of this great grand cru. The deep, primary and potentially stunning nose offers up a sappy blend of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, a beautifully complex base of minerality, gamebirds, floral tones and a stylish coating of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nascently complex, with bottomless depth of sappy fruit at the core, great focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the very, very long, pure and soil-driven finish. A stunning bottle in the making. 2023-2075. **96+.**

Domaine Fourrier (Gevrey-Chambertin)

I did not arrive at the Fourrier cellars at the best time to taste this year, as the entire cellar had been racked into tanks one week prior to my visit. The yields were down here about as low as anywhere I went in the Côte de Nuits, as Jean-Marie Fourrier reported that he lost between fifty and sixty percent of his crop in 2012, depending on which vineyard one was speaking about. As he noted, "the problems with the flowering made young vines perform like old vines, and old vines perform like very old vines, and the only trouble was that all we have is very old vines to start with!" As some of the wines had seen their sulfurs adjusted after the racking, we only tasted a representative handful of the 2012 lineup chez Fourrier this year, as it made no sense to taste wines that were not going to show well in any case, and there is just so little wine here in 2012. Throughout much of our tasting, Jean-Marie spoke of the prices that Burgundy has risen to these days, and he was particularly alarmed at how much it costs to purchase grapes from top crus if one is predisposed to expand one's roster a bit. He has made a couple of additional grand crus in 2012 and 2013, but he contracted specifically for these wines at the behest of clients and pre-sold them all directly to the clients in question, as he noted that "with the prices these days for grapes from a vineyard such as Grands Echézeaux or

Chambertin, the only method that makes sense is to have a specific client for the wines before contracting for them, and to pre-sell them to finance the entire proposition.” I do not recall which new wines he has added to the portfolio, but in any case, I did not taste them, as they had already been sold on to the end customer in any case. Of the wines that I did taste, it is clear that this is a great vintage for Jean-Marie and the 2012s from Domaine Fourrier are going to rank right up there with the greatest wines he has made in his career. They exude the purity of fruit and striking soil inflection of the vintage and will be absolute cellar treasures- if one can find a few bottles!

2012 Morey St. Denis “Clos Solon”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Clos Solon was showing very well at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a mix of red plums, cherries, cocoa, a lovely base of soil, nutskins and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, pure and tangy, with lovely transparency, modest tannins and very good length and grip on the focused and sappy finish. A very lovely village wine. 2019-2040+. **89.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Chambolle V.V. is also a fine bottle in the making, offering up a lovely and very red fruity bouquet of cherries, blood orange, red plums, chalky minerality, roses and a whisper of cedar. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and very intensely flavored, with a nice core of sappy fruit, fine soil signature, moderate, silky tannins and lovely length and grip on the tangy finish. Another superb village wine and the essence of Chambolle-Musigny. 2019-2040. **89+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Aux Echézeaux”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Gevrey “Aux Echézeaux” was also showing beautifully at the time of my visit, and again just exudes pure red fruits in this vintage. The nose is a fine blend of strawberries, cherries, a beautiful base of soil tones, a touch of mustard seed, orange peel and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and sappy at the core, with lovely succulence on the attack, fine soil drive on the finish, moderate tannins and excellent length and grip on the already quite velvety backend. This will be lovely. 2019-2040. **89+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Gevrey “Vieilles Vignes” bottling is also superb in this vintage, wafting from the glass in a mix of red plums, cherries, a complex base of soil tones, mustard seed, roses and woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and nascently complex, with another very sappy core, lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and tangy finish. All of these four village wines are excellent and it is impossible to pick a favorite from amongst them, as they are all classic examples of their respective *terroirs*. 2019-2040. **89+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cherbaudes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Fourrier Cherbaudes is excellent, with the inherent elegance of the vintage very much in evidence in this fine wine. The bouquet delivers a fine aromatic mélange of cherries, strawberries, vinesmoke, a superb base of very chalky soil nuances, mustard seed and a pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and silky, with a sappy core of fruit, excellent expression of *terroir*, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the suavely-tannic and vibrant finish. As was the case in 2010, the 2012 Cherbaudes is stunningly elegant out of the blocks this year. 2020-2050. **92.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combes aux Moines”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Combes aux Moines from Jean-Marie Fourrier is also a stellar example of the vintage, as it offers up a very pure and expressive bouquet of cherries, red plums, cocoa, a touch of gamebird, black minerality, woodsmoke and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with fine-grained tannins, striking minerality, superb sappiness at the core and excellent length and grip on the bright, nascently complex and utterly classic finish. I particularly like the striking mineral drive on the backend here, which is synthesized perfectly with the sappy red fruit. A brilliant young bottle of Combes aux Moines. 2022-2055. **93+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Clos St. Jacques *chez* Fourrier is a brilliantly elegant example of the vintage, offering up a pure and very classy bouquet of red plums, cherries, cocoa, a touch of nutskin, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nascently complex, with bottomless depth, stunning transparency, fine-grained, buried tannins, bright acids and stunning length and grip on the very pure and velvety finish. A superb wine. 2022-2055+. **94+**.

2012 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Domaine Fourrier Griotte-Chambertin is another stunning wine in the making, soaring from the glass in an pure and perfumed constellation of red and black cherries, gamebirds, very complex, chalky minerality, woodsmoke, a nice touch of fresh herbs, cocoa and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and very sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, great focus and backend energy, silky tannins and great nascent complexity on the very long and very elegant finish. A beautiful example of the vintage. 2025-2075. **96+**.

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine Fourrier

The 2012 Echézeaux from Domaine Fourrier is an excellent bottle in the making, offering up a deep and nicely reserved nose of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, cocoa, venison, a marvelously complex base of soil, fresh thyme and a stylish framing of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure on the attack and very sappy at the core, with the transparency of the vintage very much in evidence. The wine is perfectly focused and balanced, with fine-grained tannins, nascent complexity and excellent length and grip on the finish. Lovely juice. 2022-2060+. **94**.

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

The Rossignol brothers, Nicolas and David, of Domaine Rossignol-Trapet have made simply outstanding examples of the 2012 vintage, and this is a domaine that seems to get better and better with each passing vintage. Their vineyards in the Côte de Beaune were down by fifty percent in 2012 from their 2011 levels, and in the Côte de Nuits, they were down twenty to twenty-five percent for premier crus and village wine parcels (which are mostly vines in the thirty-five to forty year range), and more than fifty percent for their oldest vines in their grand crus. The malolactic fermentations here generally finished up by the end of June, but the cellar had not been racked yet and the wines were really showing brilliantly at the time of my visit. In fact, I have never tasted a more stunning range of wines from the Rossignol brothers in all my years of visiting here (and there have been dozens of great wines over the years here) and it seems very clear that the 2012s are likely to be seen in the future as the greatest wines yet produced here since the split of the old Trapet estate and the formation of Domaine Rossignol-

Trapet in the early 1990s. These are reference point 2012s that show off all the glories of pure and perfectly ripe fruit, stunning soil signatures, utterly refined tannic structures and the poise and balance of the very greatest wines of the vintage. A brilliant, brilliant portfolio chez Rossignol in 2012! I also had the chance to revisit a number of the 2011s here, as when I tasted here last March, a great many wines had only just been bottled and I did not catch them at a very good time to assess them and my notes were rather cursory. Despite the fact that the 2012s here are as good as one can find anywhere in Burgundy in this great vintage, the 2011s chez Rossignol are also stellar wines and should emphatically not be ignored in the rush to try and find a few bottles of the great 2012s here.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge from the Rossignol brothers is excellent, offering up lovely purity and soil inflection in its aromatic blend of black cherries, plums, cocoa, a nice base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is medium-full, plush and velvety, with modest tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused finish. A succulent and very fine example of its appellation. 2014-2020. **87.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

I did not taste the special *lieu à dit* bottling of Etelois on this visit and I seem to recall that the low yields had forced the production here to be blended into the Vieilles Vignes to make a bit bigger cuvée in this very short vintage. The 2012 old vine bottling is a fine bottle in the making, but it was one of the few wines in the cellar that was a bit reduced and my score may ultimately be a touch conservative as a result. Underneath the touch of reduction is a lovely wine, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, cocoa, incipient notes of grilled meat, a gentle touch of fresh herbs and a nice framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very precise, with a lovely core, suave tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. This will certainly be very good, and probably outstanding. 2018-2035+. **89-91.**

2012 Beaune “Teurons”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

As I have noted in the past, the Rossignol parcel in Teurons is beautifully-situated, the in chalkiest section of this premier cru at the top of the slope and right along the border with Les Cras. The wine has turned out beautifully in 2012, with a sophistication to the texture of its tannins that is very rare in the Côte de Beaune in this vintage. The very lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, black cherries, gamebird, woodsmoke and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, fine soil signature, very elegant tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and complex finish. A very high class bottle of Beaune. 2019-2035+. **91.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cherbaudes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2012 Cherbaudes from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is gorgeous, with the inherent elegance of the vintage really working its magic on this *terroir*. The very pure and sappy nose delivers a beautiful blend of dark berries, black cherries, a touch of coffee bean, a complex base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very velvety at the core, with marvelous focus and balance, superb transparency, fine-grained tannins and lovely grip on the elegant and very long finish. Cherbaudes can sometimes be a little weedy and recalcitrant in its youth, but the 2012 version from the Rossignol brothers is supremely elegant and a beautiful wine in the making. 2020-2050. **92+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combottes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The Rossignols’ parcel in Combottes is always the very first vines that are harvested at the domaine, as they sit up high in the vineyard where the soil is very much defined by its fine, small stones here that retain heat and ripen the grapes ahead of all their other premier crus. Further down the slope (where the Domaine Dujac parcel is for example), the soil has more clay and less stones in it and it is substantially cooler and a bit slower to ripe than up at the top. 2012 Combottes was a bit more closed on the palate than the lovely Cherbaudes, but just as precise and pure on the nose, which offers up a lovely mélange of red and black plums, cocoa powder, a beautifully complex base of soil, a touch of fresh nutmeg woodsmoke and a gentle topnote of fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely reserved in profile, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused and youthfully complex finish. This will be a gorgeous middleweight in the fullness of time. 2022-2050. **92+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Corbeaux”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2012 Corbeaux from the Rossignols is cut more from the cloth of the immediately seductive Cherbaudes than the more reserved Combottes, and it is a brilliant wine in the making. The glorious nose soars from the glass in a very pure and sappy blend of red and black plums, black cherries, espresso, black minerality, a lovely touch of grilled meat, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and utterly classic in profile, with a sappy core of pure fruit, great transparency, fine-grained tannins and stunning focus and grip on the very, very long, complex and refined finish. This is a stunning young wine! 2022-2050+. **93+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2012 Clos Prieur was also just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, so perhaps I am underrating this wine a touch as well. It is certainly very pure and deep under its gentle note of reduction, and may even have a touch more depth in the mid-palate than the stunning Corbeaux! The bouquet is a lovely, black fruity mélange of dark berries, black cherries, grilled meat, dark soil tones, French roast, a bit of bonfire and a nice base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, reserved and absolutely rock solid at the core, with suave tannins, excellent focus and balance and a very long, primary and soil-driven finish. This will be excellent and in all reality, it is probably just as special as the Corbeaux and Petite Chapelle. 2022-2050+. **92-93+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

While the 2012 Clos Prieur was a bit reduced, the Petite Chapelle was hitting on all cylinders and it was simply a pleasure to taste such a great young bottle of Gevrey premier cru. The deep, pure and still quite primary nose offers up a beautiful blend of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa powder, a very, very complex base of soil tones, fresh nutmeg, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great, sappy core of fruit, gorgeous transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, seamless and tangy finish. Another great wine in the making. 2022-2050+. **93+**.

2012 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2012 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is a breathtakingly beautiful example of the vintage, offering up a very deep and reserved nose of black cherries, black plums, gamebirds, a very, very complex base of dark soil tones, French roast and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a superb synthesis of sappy fruit and striking minerality, very suave, ripe tannins and a very,

very long, tangy and soil-driven finish. Latricières-Chambertin is probably one of the most underrated grand crus in all of Burgundy, but this legend in the making is going to make people sit up and take notice of this magical *terroir*! 2025-2075. **95+**.

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The Rossignol Chapelle-Chambertin is another magnificent example of the 2012 vintage. The brilliantly pure and nascently complex nose wafts from the glass in a blend of sappy red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, gamebirds, stunning soil, woodsmoke, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with a beautiful signature of soil, ripe, fine-grained tannins and absolutely magical length and grip on the young and dancing finish. This is another legend in the making. 2025-2075. **96.**

2012 Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The king of Burgundy has certainly performed up to its exalted reputation in the Rossignol-Trapet cellars in 2012 and this is the most brilliant wine I have ever had the pleasure to taste from the Rossignol brothers! The utterly classic and bottomless nose soars from the glass in a mélange of red and black plums, red and black cherries, a touch of the grilled meat to come, cocoa, a stunningly complex base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and brilliantly pure on the attack, with a sappy core, great focus and balance, substantial, but utterly seamless tannins and stunning length and grip on the pure, elegant and soil-driven finish. Pure brilliance! 2025-2075+. **98.**

2011s

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Etelois”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Rossignol-Trapet aux Etelois is a lovely wine, offering up a bright and complex nose of red plums, cherries, cocoa powder, gentle smokiness and a fine base of minerality. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and intensely flavored, with lovely focus, length and grip and just a wisp of tannin on the well-balanced and tangy finish. A lovely village wine. 2015-2035. **89.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cherbaudes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Cherbaudes is another very fine middleweight in the making, wafting from the glass in a stylish nose of cherries, red plums, coffee, a striking base of soil, gamebirds, a bit of bonfire and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and elegant, with a fine core of fruit, good focus and balance, modest tannins and bright acids on the long and soil-driven finish. Fine juice. 2018-2035+. **91.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combottes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Combottes has turned out beautifully from the Rossignol brothers. The lovely bouquet offers up scents of cherries, plums, cocoa powder, mustard seed, woodsmoke, a very refined base of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and very transparent, with a very solid core, silky tannins and a long, refined and tangy finish. This will be a very, very classy middleweight. 2019-2040. **91+.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Clos Prieur from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is a superb example of the vintage, with striking transparency and a very red fruity personality in this vintage (from a *terroir* that is often quite black fruity in its youth). The excellent bouquet jumps from the glass in a blend of red plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a touch of chocolate, gamebirds, fine dark soil tones and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, pure and

elegant, with fine intensity of flavor, modest tannins and excellent focus and grip on the tangy, transparent and very long finish. This is high class juice! 2019-2040. **92.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Petite Chapelle is the most reserved in personality of all these lovely premier crus from the Rossignols, but it will also be the best of them in the fullness of time. The pure and primary nose wafts from the glass in a mix of cherries, cocoa powder, fresh herb tones, woodsmoke and a striking base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and very intensely flavored, with a gorgeous signature of soil, tangy acids, a lovely core of fruit, moderate tannins and outstanding length and grip on the poised and focused finish. A very serious wine and not far off the pace of the magical 2012 version! 2020-2040. **92+.**

2011 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is extremely red fruity out of the blocks- a rarity for this normally quite black fruity *terroir*. The gorgeous and still quite youthful nose delivers an aromatic constellation of cherries, *fraises du bois*, cocoa powder, dried roses, a very complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and gentle vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a nice dollop of sappiness at the core, with fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip, bright acids and lovely balance on the long and classy finish. This needs another six or seven years to really blossom and will be a superb bottle. 2020-2045+. **94.**

2011 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Chapelle-Chambertin is also outstanding. The deep, pure and complex bouquet offers up scents of cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, marvelous soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebirds and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and deeper at the core than the Latricières, with very suave tannins, laser-like focus and a very, very long, poised and classic finish. This will be the epitome of elegance when it has fully blossomed and is a superb example of the vintage. 2021-2050. **94+.**

2011 Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2011 Rossignol-Trapet Chambertin is also a very, very fine bottle in the making. The deep, pure and youthful nose wafts from the glass in a mix of red and black plums, cherries, cocoa, nutskin, incipient notes of meatiness, mustard seed, a complex soil signature and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a very solid core, lovely focus and grip, tangy acids and a very, very long, moderately tannic and soil-driven finish. High class juice! 2022-2060. **95.**

Domaine Joseph Roty (Gevrey-Chambertin)

It had been a while since I last visited Domaine Joseph Roty to taste, as Philippe Roty had not been well and I had always stipulated in my requests for a visit sent to Madame Roty that I did not want to visit if Philippe was still not back in good health. Consequently, I had not been back here in about eighteen months to taste (and sadly missed out on trying the 2010s from the domaine, which I am sure are magical!), but was very, very happy to hear that Philippe was in better health and the family would be happy to see me on this November trip. Philippe Roty is very, very close friends with Denis Bachelet and Monsieur Bachelet had already told me that he was very content to see Philippe out in the vines again in October of this year working the harvest, but he also observed that Philippe was not yet up to one hundred percent full strength and it was clear that the picking took a lot out of him this past fall. Happily, he had had a bit of time to regain a bit of strength prior to my visit a month later- though not much time- as of

course, fermenting the new vintage is a full month of work as well and all the world was descending on Burgundy to taste the 2012s right on the heels of the 2013s being racked off into barrels after their alcoholic fermentations! But, he was in good spirits when he and his brother Pierre-Jean Roty received us on a late Friday afternoon in November. As is customary for my visits here, the Roty brothers had prepared the lineup of 2011s to taste on this vintage, as they do not like to show the new vintage out of barrel (in much the same manner as Domaine Michel Gaunoux in Pommard) and I am typically one vintage behind in my cycle of tasting here, but it is always a nice break from the usual tastings to revisit the previous year at Domaine Roty. The 2011s are exemplary, with great purity, complexity and perfect balance and the wines will rank right up at the top of the 2011 pyramid.



Philippe Roty in his parcel of vines in the vineyard of Gevrey-Chambertin "la Brunelle".

2011 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Philippe Roty

The 2011 Bourgogne Aligoté from Philippe Roty will drink very well young, as it shows off nice, juicy fruit and a lovely base of soil to complement it. The nose is a blend of lemon, green apple, chalky soil tones and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is medium-full, crisp and succulent, with a nice signature of soil, bright acids and very good length and grip. Lovely Aligoté. 2014-2018+. **87.**

2011 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Domaine Roty version of Bourgogne blanc is interesting in that it is a fifty-fifty blend of chardonnay and pinot blanc and the 2011 version is quite fine. The bouquet is a stylish blend of apple, peach, beeswax, a nice base of limestone soil and a touch of apple blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and quite generous on the attack, with a good core, a nice girdle of framing acidity and lovely grip on the focused and long finish. There is a bit more mid-palate amplitude here than in the Bourgogne Aligoté, but both wines are comparable in quality. Good juice. 2014-2018. **87.**

2011 Marsannay Blanc- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Marsannay Blanc was showing very well at the time of my visit, with the minerality here almost “salty” in personality and augmenting very nicely the fruit tones on the nose of apple, white peach, beeswax, spring flowers and soil. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, juicy and complex, with fine mid-palate depth, crisp acids, fine focus and balance and a long, zesty and soil-driven finish. This is a lovely bottle for early drinking, but it will gain in complexity with a few years’ worth of bottle age. As always, a lovely example. 2014-2020+. **88+.**

2011 Marsannay Rosé- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Roty and Bart families make my favorite examples of Marsannay Rosé, and the 2011 from the Rotys is a lovely bottle, wafting from the glass in a bright and succulent aromatic blend of melon, tangerine, chalky soil tones, orange peel and a nice topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is medium-full, fresh and focused, with a nice core of fruit, good balance and a very nice length and grip on the bouncy finish. Good juice. 2014-2018. **88.**

2011 Bourgogne Grande Ordinaire- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Roty version of BGO is always one hundred percent pinot noir (no gamay in the blend here) and the 2011 is a pretty wine that will drink well young, but shows a bit of backend tannin and should have no troubles keeping for a half dozen years or more. The bouquet is a stylish blend of cherries, strawberries, a touch of meatiness and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is medium-full, juicy and easy-going on the attack, with good mid-palate depth and a bit of backend tannin perking up the sneaky-long finish. Good everyday juice. 2014-2020+. **87.**

2011 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Joseph Roty

The “straight” Bourgogne rouge hails from vines planted in Marsannay, whereas the Pressoniers is a parcel in Gevrey-Chambertin. The 2011 “straight” Bourgogne is a really lovely example of its level, offering up a complex nose of red and black cherries, chocolate, a nice base of soil, gentle smokiness and a dollop of toasty new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and youthful in its personality, with a good core, fine focus and a bit of chewy tannin adding grip on the long and still quite primary finish. I would give this a year or two in the cellar to really blossom. It is a very good bottle. 2015-2025. **87+.**

2011 Bourgogne “Pressoniers”- Domaine Joseph Roty

I found out on this trip that there is a very good, historical reason why I have always liked the Roty version of Bourgogne “Pressoniers”, as this particular section of the *lieu à dit* in Gevrey-Chambertin (located on the far side of the *Route Nationale* across from Clos Prieur) at one time used to be classified as Gevrey *villages*. It was declassified down to Bourgogne in 1964, for at the time a few vineyards in the neighboring village of Brochon were re-classified up as Gevrey-Chambertin *villages*, including the superb vineyard of Evocelles, and the part of Pressoniers that was allowed to be sold as Gevrey AC was downgraded to keep balance in the

AOC. Philippe Roty noted that there was a thirty year grace period for those whose vines were downgraded, so until 1994, many *vignerons* with vines in Pressonniers continued to sell the wine as Gevrey AC. Therefore, historically this *terroir* was always ranked a bit higher than it is today and it is not surprising how good a wine the Roty brothers have crafted from it over the years! The 2011 is excellent, jumping from the glass in a superb blend of red and black cherries, grilled meat, a touch of coffee bean, a lovely base of soil and a deft touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and intensely flavored, with a fine core, moderate, ripe tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and nascently complex finish. As is so often the case with this bottling, this will make a complex and very classy middleweight with a bit of bottle age. 2015-2025+. **88.**

2011 Marsannay- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Marsannay *villages* is also a very fine example of the vintage, delivering a bright and complex bouquet of red and black cherries, a touch of plum, meaty tones, cocoa, dark soil and just a touch of toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and complex, with a good core of fruit, fine balance and a long, poised and moderately tannic finish. This is fine juice and an excellent value. 2015-2025+. **88.**

2011 Marsannay “Quartiers”- Domaine Philippe Roty

The 2011 Marsannay “Quartiers” was also showing very well indeed at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a deep and complex blend of black cherries, cassis, grilled meat, a touch of coffee bean, fine soil tones and a bit of toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely chewy, with very good focus and mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Another lovely bottle of Marsannay. 2017-2030+. **88+.**

2011 Marsannay “Champs Ste. Etienne”- Domaine Philippe Roty

There are only two *vignerons* with parcels of vines in Champs Ste. Etienne- Philippe Roty and one other producer, and as the other *vigneron* blends his production into a Marsannay *tout court* bottling, this is effectively a monopole for Philippe. The 2011 version is an excellent wine in the making, offering up a very classy bouquet of red plums, black cherries, gamebirds, coffee bean, a fine base of complex soil tones and a nice framing of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine-grained tannins, lovely, nascent complexity and excellent length and grip on the focused and classy finish. For those who lament the upward spiral of Burgundy prices, a wine such as this is just what the doctor ordered, as this will age beautifully and offers up outstanding value. 2018-2035. **89+.**

2011 Marsannay “Ouzeloy”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Domaine Joseph Roty Ouzeloy is a stellar bottle in the making and another absolute steal in the market for ageworthy, high quality red Burgundy. The deep, complex and classy nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black cherries, plums, espresso, woodsmoke, gamebirds, dark soil tones and a touch of nutty new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sports a lovely core of fruit, with excellent soil inflection, ripe, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the youthfully complex and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2019-2035. **90.**

2011 Marsannay “Boivin” - Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Boivin bottling from the Roty family is also excellent, delivering a very refined bouquet of red and black cherries, just a touch of dark berry, dark soil tones, cocoa, woodsmoke and toasty new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in

personality, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and impressive length and grip on the focused and very promising finish. Another bargain! 2019-2035. **90.**

2011 Marsannay “Clos de Jeu”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Rotys’ old vine parcel in the Clos de Jeu-are now more than seventy years-old and the wine has turned out beautifully in 2011. The bouquet is a deep and classy blend of cassis, black cherries, espresso, a refined, complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, gentle meatiness and a deft framing of toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely defined by its black minerality, with a lovely core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy and complex finish. Another absolutely stellar bottle of young Marsannay! 2019-2035. **90+.**

2011 Côte de Nuits Villages “Queue de Hareng”- Domaine Philippe Roty

Philippe Roty’s parcel of vines for his Côte de Nuits Villages bottling are planted in Brochon and lie alongside of the fine vineyard of Evocelles. I have always liked this cuvée and the 2011 is no exception, as the wine offers up a super bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, chocolate, elegant dark soil tones, just a touch of meatiness and a lovely base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a fine core, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and quite classy finish. Fine juice. 2015-2035. **90.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Gevrey *villages* was showing very well at the time of my visit, but it further underscored just how good the top range of Marsannays are in this vintage *chez* Roty. The bouquet is a fine blend of black cherries, plums, grilled meat, a fine base of soil tones, a nice touch of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with lovely balance, a good core and fine length and grip on the modestly tannic finish. A lovely village wine. 2017-2035. **88+.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champs Chenys”- Domaine Joseph Roty

I have lots of Domaine Roty’s Champs Chenys in my personal cellar and I always love how well this wine ages. The 2011 is excellent, wafting from the glass in a classy bouquet of cassis, dark berries, incipient notes of grilled meat, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and tangy, with fine mid-palate concentration, excellent focus and balance, ripe, chewy tannins and superb grip on the impressively long and youthful finish. This is old vines and it really shows in 2011! 2020-2045. **90+.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champs Chenys” V.V.- Domaine Philippe Roty

As I have noted in the past, Philippe Roty was able to purchase this parcel of old vines (planted in 1934) in time for the 2002 harvest, and since that vintage, there have been two Champs Chenys bottlings from the Roty family. These vines abut Charmes-Chambertin up at the top of the slope in Champs Chenys and the 2011 version is stellar, offering up a deep, complex and sappy nose of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, French roast, black minerality, woodsmoke and a nice touch of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with fine focus and structure, excellent complexity, ripe, chewy tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and classy young finish. This is premier cru quality without a doubt and another absolute steal in the marketplace! 2019-2040. **91+.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Brunelle”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Roty vines in la Brunelle are now in their late-fifties and really producing lovely grapes these days, so it is no surprise that the 2011 is a lovely rendition of this very elegant

Gevrey AC bottling. The refined bouquet is a blend of red and black cherries, gamebirds, cocoa, a beautiful base of almost chocolaty soil tones, a touch of nuttiness and a fine base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, elegant and ripely tannic, with a superb core of fruit, lovely focus and balance and a long, nascently complex and very classy finish. Lovely juice. 2019-2040. **91.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Clos Prieur is also a stellar example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, black plums, espresso, dark soil tones, grilled meat, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and youthfully structured, with a fine core of black fruit, superb soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, poised and very promising finish. This is always the most black fruity of the Roty Gevrey *villages* bottlings, and the 2011 will be another excellent wine. 2020-2040+. **91+.**

2011 Gevrey-Chambertin “Fontenys”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Fontenys from Domaine Roty is a classic vintage for this old vine, black fruity and masculine premier cru. The superb and still quite primary nose offers up scents of dark berries, black cherries, grilled meat, dark soil tones, charred wood, espresso and toasty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully structured, with excellent mid-palate concentration, chewy tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, primary and well-balanced finish. Lovely juice in the making, but this will need time in the cellar to blossom. 2023-2060. **93.**

2011 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Mazy-Chambertin from the Roty family is stunning. The deep, complex and still very primary finish offers up notes of cassis, dark berries, grilled meat, espresso, black minerality, a touch of the vineyard’s vegetality, dark chocolate and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, firm, perfectly integrated tannins, stunning focus and grip and a very, very long, poised and powerful finish. This is a great, great example of the 2011 vintage! 2025-2075. **96.**

2011 Griottes-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

Not surprisingly, the 2011 Griottes-Chambertin is every bit as promising as the family’s superb Mazy. The deep, pure and youthful nose delivers a mélange of red and black cherries, cocoa, grilled meat, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of mustard seed, roses and toasty new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very primary profile, ripe, chewy tannins just buried in fruit, superb soil inflection and a very, very long, nascently complex and magical finish. Great juice. 2025-2075. **96.**

2011 Charmes-Chambertin “Trés Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2011 Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Roty is also stupendous. The bouquet is a superb and utterly classic blend of black cherries, cassis, grilled meat, dark chocolate, a marvelously complex base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of coffee bean and toasty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven, with bottomless depth, impeccable focus and balance, ripe, chewy tannins, excellent acidity and stunning length and grip on the complex and very pure, palate-staining finish. Great juice in the making. 2025-2075. **96.**

Domaine Armand Rousseau (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Éric Rousseau has made marvelous wines at Domaine Rousseau for many, many years now, so it seems a little silly (given the stunning backlog of magical vintages to have emerged from the Rousseau cellars during Éric's tenure) to state that the 2012s are the greatest wines that he has yet produced here, but as I left the cellars following my tasting of the new vintage, I could not help but think that these may well be the wines that will come to represent the high water mark of his great career! The entire cellar of the 2012s had been racked at the start of September and the wines were absolutely singing at the end of November. There is simply not a weak wine in the entire range this year and not a single wine that I would not be more than delighted to have by the caseload in my own cellar. Please keep this in mind, as the short crop and the magical quality here is certainly going to make it a nightmare to get the customary supplies of Rousseau wines in 2012, and if my advice is worth anything, do not say "no" to any Domaine Rousseau wine that is offered this year, as they will all be stunning wines in the fullness of time! I know that a great many fans of this domaine are accustomed to simply buying the top four crus in the cellar year in and year out, but with the very short crop in 2012, this is going to be even more difficult than usual. However, I have never tasted such brilliant Rousseau premier crus such as Cazetiers and Lavaux St. Jacques in 2012, and wines such as the Charmes, Mazy and Clos de la Roche are simply brilliant! The combination of sappy, very pure fruit and brilliantly expressive terroirs make the 2012s chez Rousseau amongst the most magical range of wines of the entire vintage, and the "wine of the vintage" probably calls these cellars home for a few more months before it strikes out on its own to find well-heeled collectors willing to give it a good and long-lasting corner in the cellar.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

As readers are already quite aware, I have been a fan of this supremely elegant Gevrey villages bottling for many, many years, but the 2012 is extra special! The excellent nose shows off the purity and sappiness of this vintage to fine effect, wafting from the glass in a beautifully perfumed blend of red and black cherries, red plums, cocoa, a beautiful base of dark, Gevrey soil tones, woodsmoke and rose petals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy this year, with striking transparency, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the very soil-driven finish. This is beautifully elegant and has more mid-palate stuffing than customary- a very good combination I might add! 2017-2035+. **90+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin "Lavaux St. Jacques"- Domaine Armand Rousseau

Lavaux St. Jacques is often a forgotten cru *chez* Rousseau, despite the fact that it is always a very well-made and elegant example of this fine premier cru. But, the 2012 vintage has conspired to shake visitors from their customary habit of overlooking this wine in the cellar, as it is an absolute beauty this year! The supremely elegant and complex nose wafts from the glass in a sappy blend of red and black cherries, a nice touch of sweet, dark berry, coffee bean, dark soils, incipient meatiness, woodsmoke and a discrete topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave, with a fine core of sappy black fruit, superb soil inflection, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. *Chapeau!* 2020-2045+. **92**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin "Cazetiers"- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The domaine's parcel of Cazetiers is half planted with seventy year-old vines and half with forty year-old vines, so the yields on this cru were particularly short in 2012, as the poor flowering of the vintage affected old vines the most severely. However, what was left from the

short crop has turned out beautifully, as the wine offers up a pure and classy bouquet of red and black cherries, early signs of the grilled meats to come, a fine base of soil tones, nutskin, roses and a lovely spread of fresh herbs in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with fine transparency, ripe tannins, superb focus and grip and a very long, well-balanced and complex finish. Picking a favorite between this and the Lavaux is going to be very hard for a very long time! 2020-2045+. **92.**



Éric Rousseau, the proud father of some of the most magical young red Burgundies I have ever tasted.

2012 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

I am a big fan of the Charmes-Chambertin from the Rousseau family each and every year, as I often find it very, very elegant and complex, even in vintages where it can start out life a touch *fluide*. However, in short crops such as 2010 and 2012, there is an extra level of depth here that is very exciting to behold and the 2012 Charmes is a stunning young wine! The brilliantly sappy and pure nose soars from the glass in a combination of sappy strawberries, cherries, blood orange, cocoa, just a hint of grilled meat, dark soil tones and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and resplendent in its sappy red fruit at the core, with great focus and transparency, fine-grained tannins, exceptional focus and grip and a very, very long, suavely-tannic and tangy finish. This is a great bottle of Charmes- no ifs, ands or buts and probably the greatest rendition of this fine grand cru that I have ever tasted from the Rousseau family! 2022-2060+. **94.**

2012 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

As was the case with the beautiful 2010 Rousseau Mazy-Chambertin, the 2012 vintage's inherent elegance has worked its magic on this wine. The great nose delivers a glorious constellation of red and black cherries, sweet, dark berries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebirds, cocoa and a lovely topnote of youthful Mazis's strain of vegetality. On the palate the wine is very pure and full-bodied, with magical mid-palate depth and sappiness, a strikingly elegant rendition of this cru's *terroir*, ripe tannins and outstanding soil drive and balance on the focused and very, very classy finish. There is not a shred of Mazy-Chambertin's sometime youthfully *sauvage* personality to be found in this great, great wine. Another absolutely reference point example of this cuvée *chez* Rousseau! 2022-2060. **94.**

2012 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2012 Clos de la Roche from Éric Rousseau was raised in somewhere between ten and fifteen percent new oak in this vintage, which has allowed all of the beautiful fruit and soil tones to stay front and center in this seamless beauty. The deep and very sappy nose wafts from the glass in a complex mélange of cherries, pomegranate, mustard seed, venison, very complex soil tones, woodsmoke and a faint whisper of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a sappy core of pure fruit, great mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long and utterly refined finish. Another great wine! 2022-2060. **94.**

2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin “Clos des Ruchottes”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

I love the new oak numbers on the first several grand crus in the Rousseau cellars in 2012, as the Clos des Ruchottes was raised in twenty percent new oak this year. This is unequivocally the greatest wine I have yet tasted from the Clos des Ruchottes since the Rousseau family purchased this plot in 1977, as the wine simply soars in its stunning and very sappy aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, *fraises du bois*, cocoa, a complex base of dark soil tones, gamebirds, gentle notes of mustard seed and a very discreet framing of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and stunningly pure and sappy at the core, with laser-like focus, great soil drive, very suave tannins and boundless energy and beauty on the very, very long and magical finish. A brilliant, brilliant wine. 2022-2065+. **95+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2012 Clos St. Jacques *chez* Rousseau is another simply brilliant wine, and I was starting to get a bit worried, as I was already beginning to run out of numbers and I still had the Clos de Bèze and Chambertin to go! In any case, the 2012 Clos St. Jacques is a stellar example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a stunning and very flamboyant nose of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa, hints of the grilled meats to come, a brilliantly complex base of soil tones, exotic spices and vanillin oak. I think this wine was raised in sixty percent new wood this year, but the depth of fruit has positively eaten up the impression of new oak, and if you told me it was raised in twenty percent new oak, I would think that it was probably just about right! On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and stunningly suave on the attack, with a great core of sappy fruit, a very refined sense of soil, fine-grained tannins, outstanding focus and grip and a very, very long, unrepentantly elegant and velvety finish. The synthesis here of soil and gloriously sappy fruit is remarkable. 2022-2060. **96.**

2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” from Éric Rousseau is spectacular in every way, shape and form. The nose is deeper, sappier and more primary than the Clos St. Jacques, as it delivers a magical blend of red and black cherries, plums, a touch of blood orange, cocoa, a

kaleidoscopically complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebirds and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very sappy at the core, with brilliant soil signature, ripe, very fine-grained tannins and brilliant length and grip on the youthful and flawless finish. A legendary effort! 2025-2080. **98+**.

2012 Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

As I was going through my paroxysms of ecstasy with the glass of 2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” in my hands, Éric Rousseau smiled knowingly, as the Chambertin was still to come! This is as good an example of young red Burgundy as I have ever had the pleasure to taste and has to rank up at the very summit of wines that I have tasted in the last several years. The combination here of bottomless depth of pure and very sappy fruit, the glorious complexity of unmatched soil tones and the seamless and effortless beauty of this wine on the palate are the stuff of legend. The brilliantly stunning bouquet is a youthful blend of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, crystalline minerality, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, gentle notes of mustard seed, vanillin oak and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, flawless in its focus and balance and very, very sappy at the core, with magical transparency down to that great Chambertin *terroir*, vibrant acids, fine-grained tannins and seamless balance and grip on the endless, electric and supremely elegant finish. Just wait until this wine sees some bottle age and starts to get complex! Sheer brilliance. 2025-2080. **100**.

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Jean-Louis Trapet has crafted absolutely brilliant wines in 2012 and these may very well be the finest wines he has yet produced during his long and very successful tenure at the head of this family domaine. I did not catch his 2010s out of barrel at the most opportune moment a few years ago, so I do not have quite the same sense as how these magical 2012s stack up to those fines wines, but my gut instinct that these 2012s will long sit at the very pinnacle of the wines produced here at this legendary estate in Gevrey-Chambertin. The malos here were a bit on the late side according to Jean-Louis, so all the wines that remained still in barrel were not yet racked and were gently nurturing on their fine lees, with the exception of the Gevrey-Chambertin AC, which had been racked prior to the harvest. The Bourgogne rouge and Marsannay here were already bottled- shortly before the harvest of 2013 got under way- but, everything else (other than aforementioned Gevrey villages) was to be bottled sometime in the spring and was just happily resting in barrel without racking at the time of my visit and the wines were absolutely singing. Jean-Louis has only made a blended bottling of Gevrey-Chambertin “Premier Cru” this year, rather than bottling each vineyard separately, as he simply did not have enough production to make each one of these a viable-sized cuvée on their own. Yields at Domaine Trapet in 2012 were down an additional fifteen to twenty percent from the already very short crop of 2010 here, so there is not going to be a lot of these brilliant wines to go around and it will behoove one to start making inquiries early on about the availability of these brilliant 2012s. The harvest here chez Trapet began on September 21st of 2012. Jean-Louis Trapet used a bit more whole cluster fermentation in this vintage, for as he noted, “the stems were absolutely perfect in terms of ripeness and I could not see any good reason not to use a bit more this year than in previous years.” He also used a bit less new oak for the Latricières-Chambertin and the Chapelle-Chambertin in 2012, with both of these wines raised in about a third new oak, and needless to say, to my palate this was certainly a stellar decision! The entire range here is stunning, with the rare combination of plush, sappy and very pure fruit, striking soil signatures and those silky, fine-grained tannins that the very best producers in the Côte de Nuits have been

able to find in their wines from this microscopic vintage. The 2012 Trapet wines are legends in the making!

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2012 Trapet Bourgogne hails from vines that are planted right at the base of the Clos Vougeot and which were planted in the 1960s, so these are now old vines. I think that this is a beautiful bottle of Bourgogne in the making, but it was still showing a bit of bottle shock after its bottling in late September and had not yet fully recovered at the time of my visit. The bouquet is a very pretty blend of cherries, strawberries, fine soil tones and a nice touch of woodsmoke in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and juicy, with just a touch of tannins and sneaky length and grip. I am sure there is more stuffing and detail here than is currently in evidence, but it just needs a bit more time to bounce back from its bottling. Expect the wine to place at the high end of my range when it recovers from the *mise*. 2014-2020+. **86-87+?**

2012 Marsannay- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The Marsannay 2012 had also been bottled right before the picking began for the 2013 harvest, but it seemed just a bit more recovered than the Bourgogne at the time of my visit. The bouquet is a lovely and more black fruity blend of black cherries, cassis, dark soil tones, venison, coffee bean, fresh herb tones and just a whisper of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely chewy, with a very good core, fine focus and very good stuffing and grip on the long and classy finish. This is going to be a delicious bottle of wine and a great bargain of the vintage. 2017-2030. **88+.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

While the 2012 Gevrey AC had been racked, it was totally on form and showing beautifully in late November. The stunning and very pure nose jumps from the glass in a wonderful blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, cocoa, a hint of fresh thyme and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very transparent, with a fine core of fruit, excellent focus and very fine length and grip on the gently tannic and succulent finish. A beautiful bottle of *villages*! 2018-2035+. **90.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Ostrea”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I did not taste the Capita old vine cuvée on this visit (and cannot remember if the yields were sufficient to produce it this year, or if the old vine production was rolled into either this wine or the straight Gevrey in 2012), but in any case, the 2012 Ostrea is really a superb bottle in the making. The bouquet shows more depth and sappiness than the straight *villages*, as it jumps from the glass in a mix of black cherries, red plums, cocoa, dark soil tones, gamebirds, a touch of nutskin, gentle new wood hints and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and marvelously complex out of the blocks, with a very sappy core, fine-grained tannins and excellent soil drive and grip on the very long and classy finish. I love this wine this year! 2019-2040. **91.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Premier Cru”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

This is a blend in 2012 of Petite Chapelle, Corbeaux and Clos Prieur and it is absolutely stunning wine. The beautiful nose offers up a complex and perfumed constellation of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, a touch of grilled meat, dark soil tones, pungent violets and a deft touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off beautiful mid-palate depth, with a very, very transparent personality, suave tannins, superb focus and grip

and a very, very long, tangy and flawlessly balanced finish. A simply gorgeous wine in the making. 2020-2050+. **93.**

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Jean-Louis Trapet's 2012 Chapelle-Chambertin is the stuff that dreams are made from. The simply stunning bouquet offers up a gorgeous mix of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa powder, gamebirds, a touch of nutskin, a very, very complex base of dark soil tones and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very primary, with a bottomless and very sappy core of fruit, great mineral drive, laser-like focus and a very, very long, seamless and ripely tannic finish. This is the absolute quintessence of Chapelle- the most elegant of all the grand crus in Gevrey and perfectly suited to the style of the 2012 vintage! 2022-2075. **96.**

2012 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2012 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Trapet is also monumental this year, and given how brilliant these two wines are in this vintage, no heart could pine for the straight Chambertin here if they do not find it! The pure, complex and utterly refined nose wafts from the glass in a blend of dark berries, black plums, black cherries, woodsmoke, espresso, grilled meat, fresh herb, dark soil and just a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very elegant, with a bottomless core, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, perfectly balanced and complex finish. Pretty magical juice! 2024-2075. **96.**

2012 Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

If Jean-Louis Trapet has ever made a finer wine than this stunning 2012 Chambertin, I am yet to taste it! The brilliant bouquet delivers a constellation of red and black cherries, plums, coffee bean, grilled meats, fresh thyme, woodsmoke, a gloriously complex base of soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and marvelously sappy at the core, with stunning minerality, perfect focus and balance, very suave, ripe tannins and an endless, seamless and brilliantly complex finish. A brilliant, brilliant wine! 2025-2075+. **98+.**

Morey St. Denis

Domaine Dujac (Morey St. Denis)

I had a rather unique visit with Jeremy Seysses during this November trip, as I agreed to taste along with Allen Meadows at the domaine, as both of us were trying to respect the difficulties faced by vigneron with multiple visits and a very short crop. I had tasted with Allen on several occasions in the past, when he was first starting up Burghound and I was still a rare wine broker, so I figured it would be a very pleasant experience to taste together again. I do see Allen fairly regularly when we are both in Burgundy and get along with him quite well, but on this visit, the conversation about the vintage seemed quite constrained and I have to hypothesize that it was probably not a good idea for the two of us to be tasting together, as I seem to have ended up with a lot less background information about the 2012s from Domaine Dujac than I normally have after a visit with Jeremy. In any event, what I did glean from the brief moments of background conversation was that the Dujac wines came in with natural sugars in the 12 to 12.8 percent range, which showed very good ripeness, and Jeremy used anywhere from eighty-five to one hundred percent whole clusters in 2012, as the stems were beautifully ripe. The malos here generally finished up between July and August of 2013, but the cellar had not yet been racked at the time of my visit, and there were several wines that were more than ready for the racking (which was scheduled to begin within a week or so of my mid-month visit). With so many of the

wines showing at least moderate signs of reduction, it was a rather tough cellar to work through, but there is little doubt that despite seeing this lineup in a very cranky moment during the élevage, this is going to be a very special range of 2012s. I was very pleased to see that a few of the grand crus were raised in three-quarters or less new oak in this vintage, and needless to say, if this trend continues, I will be very, very happy to see what happens with what is already one of the greatest ranges of wines to be found anywhere in the world! Could they get even better with less new wood? I did not get figures for the village and premier crus in 2012, but Jeremy Seysses observed that the 2012 yields in their grand crus were down anywhere from thirty to fifty percent from their crop load in 2011, and 2011 was not a particularly generous crop to start with! Jeremy also noted that the domaine is working on a new distribution plan for their tiny amount of Romanée-St.-Vivant, as the family is tired of allocating out very small allotments to a few, most favored customers, only to see those same bottles appearing at auction a couple of months later. He is thinking that the domaine may end up auctioning off the bottles directly to clients, and in that way, hopefully getting the wines into the hands of the people that really want to drink and cellar the bottles, rather than those who simply flip them at auction in a brazen bit of Burgundy arbitrage. Of the notes that follow, I have scored wines that were in a fairly reduced state in a range, and those that were singing with a single number. I would fully expect the wines that were a little cranky with reduction to eventually land at the higher number of their respective range.

2012 Morey St. Denis- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2012 Morey St. Denis from Dujac Fils et Père was a bit reduced at the time of my visit, but underneath is a very pretty wine of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebirds and cool, dark soil. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and very suave on the backend, with modest tannins and very lovely length and grip. I am sure this will be a lovely bottle with a few years of cellaring. 2016-2035+. **88-89+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2012 Dujac Fils et Père Chambolle AC is really, really lovely wine in the making, with all of the charm and sappy purity that this vintage is long going to be famous for very much in evidence in this stylish village wine. The bouquet is a very fine blend of black cherries, plums, cocoa, a lovely base of soil and a nice touch of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, plush and very elegant, with a nice sappy core, fine, gentle tannins and a long, tangy and very classy finish. Lovely juice. 2015-2035+. **89+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2012 Gevrey *villages* bottling from Dujac Fils et Père was also showing very much spot on at the time of my visit, and further underscored my impression that Gevrey is one of the really blessed villages in this vintage. The superb nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, dark plums, cocoa, a lovely base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of nutskin and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite velvety on the attack, with a lovely core, fine focus and soil signature, modest tannins and lovely length and grip on the bright and classy finish. Fine juice. 2016-2035+. **90**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Damodes”- Dujac Fils et Père

The les Damodes 2012 from Dujac Fils et Père was just a bit cranky, but with a bit of swirling, it began to show quite well and offered up a very red fruity personality this year that I found particularly attractive. The bouquet is a classy blend of cherries, a touch of blood orange, gamebirds, coffee, a fine signature of soil and a nice dollop of nutskin in the upper register. On

the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a lovely core of pure fruit, a classic base of chewy, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy and very well-balanced finish. Another lovely bottle in the making. 2020-2050. **89-91+**.

2012 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 “estate” Morey AC was particularly reluctant to be tasted at the time of my visit, as this wine was quite reduced and really impossible to place a score upon. Underneath the reduction is a fullish wine of lovely precision on the backend, a fine sappy and very black fruity core, fine transparency and impressive length and grip on the modestly tannic finish. I am sure this will be really lovely, but it is hard to imagine catching it at a worse time to try and taste!

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Dujac

The domaine’s own bottling of Chambolle AC was a bit less cranky than the Morey, and it was much easier to get a read on this very promising village wine. The bouquet is quite black fruity this year, offering up scents of black cherries, a bit of dark berry, espresso, woodsmoke and a lovely base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is fullish, primary and shows of a lovely core of fruit, with tangy acids, modest tannins and lovely mineral drive on the long backend. This will be a lovely wine. 2018-2035+. **90**.

2012 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru”- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Morey “Premier Cru” was very easy to get a read on at the time of my visit and this is going to be a lovely wine. The bouquet is very pure and very precise, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark plums, a touch of graphite, espresso, a lovely base of soil and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very nicely focused, with a sappy core, fine transparency and impressive backend energy and bounce on the suavely-tannic and classy finish. Fine juice. 2020-2050. **92**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Gruenchers”- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Domaine Dujac Gruenchers was showing quite reserved at the time of my visit, but not particularly reduced, and I think this is just going to be a wine that wants a good eight to ten years in the cellar to really blossom. The bouquet offers up lovely purity and nascent complexity in its mélange of black cherries, damsons, cocoa, complex minerality, woodsmoke, incipient notes of gamebird and a stylish base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and balance on the very long, vibrant finish. This is going to be a beautiful bottle of Chambolle in the fullness of time. 2020-2050+. **92+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Combottes was again rather reductive at the time of my visit and ready for its imminent racking. With a bit of urging, the wine reluctantly offers up a very promising and quite black fruity bouquet of cassis, black cherries, espresso, gamebirds, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, suave on the attack and impressively transparent, with a sappy core, fine-grained tannins and excellent balance on the long, pure and focused finish. This will certainly be lovely. 2022-2055. **92-93**.

2012 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Charmes-Chambertin was raised in seventy-five percent new wood this year, and this percentage seems to really have worked beautifully with this *terroir*. The bouquet is really very deep, pure and classic, jumping from the glass in a mix of cassis, dark plums, bitter chocolate, a bit of venison, woodsmoke, incipient notes of mustard seed and a lovely base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with

superb focus and transparency, suave, ripe tannins and superb backend energy on the very long, poised and classic finish. Great juice in the making. 2022-2065. **94+**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Dujac

This was really a roller coaster visit, as after the absolutely singing 2012 Charmes, the Beaumonts was again pretty hunkered down behind its reduction and waiting patiently for its racking! Underneath is a very good wine in the making, with notes of red and black cherries, dark chocolate, dark soil, woodsmoke, gamebirds and a nice base of new wood (this is also raised in seventy-five percent new barrels- same as the Charmes in 2012). On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite shapely on the attack, with a very good core of fruit, lovely soil drive, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and youthful finish. This will be very good. 2020-2045+. **91-92+**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Malconsorts from the Seysses family is going to be a very, very lovely example of the vintage, but it is cut from the same cloth as the refined and reserved Gruenchers, and it will need some extended cellaring to really blossom and show all of its layers of complexity. The very classy nose gently emerges from the glass in a refined blend of red plums, black raspberries, cocoa, a touch of nutskin, a beautifully complex base of minerality, woodsmoke, spices and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, great backend minerality, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the tangy and perfectly balanced finish. This wine is quite tightly-knit today, but there is an inner core of energy that will make this a stunning wine when it has blossomed! 2020-2060. **94+**.

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Echézeaux at Domaine Dujac was raised in seventy percent new wood in this vintage (yeah, yeah, yeah!) and was showing absolutely beautifully at the time of my visit. The deep, complex and quite red fruity nose this year wafts from the glass in a superb blend of raspberries, red plums, venison, Asian spices (cardamom?), woodsmoke, excellent minerality and a stylish base of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tight and very mineral in personality, with a superb core of fruit, lovely focus and balance, suave, elegant tannins and exceptional length and grip on the very pure and soil-driven finish. One of the greatest young vintages of Echézeaux I have ever had the pleasure to taste at Domaine Dujac, and I have been visiting here for a while now! 2025-2075. **95**.

2012 Clos St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

Back on the roller coaster! The 2012 Clos St. Denis from Domaine Dujac was pretty reduced at the time of my visit, but again, with a bit of coaxing, offers up scents of red and black cherries, nutskin, cocoa, lovely spices, gamebirds, soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very transparent, with a lovely core, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy finish. I am sure this will be excellent, but it would have been awfully nice (particularly after all the fireworks in the glass provided by the Echézeaux) to have caught this wine in full bloom in the cellars! 2022-2060+. **94-95**.

2012 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Dujac

The 2012 Clos de la Roche was also a bit reductive at the time of my visit. Underneath is clearly a superb wine in the making, offering up a lovely combination of sappiness and structural reserve. The bouquet is a fine blend of plums, dark berries, raw cocoa, gamebirds, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very elegant on the attack, with a great core of sappy fruit, excellent soil signature, superb focus

and grip and a very long, suavely-tannic and tangy finish. This is going to be a very special vintage for this wine. 2024-2075. **95-96.**

2012 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Dujac

Happily, the 2012 Bonnes-Mares was not grumpy at all and was just singing in the barrel at the time of my visit. The superb bouquet soars from the glass in a classic mélange of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, gamebirds, a stunningly complex base of soil, gentle notes of nutskin, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, and very pure on the attack, with great sappiness at the core, stunning transparency, fine-grained tannins and magical length and grip on the perfectly balanced and very classy, young finish. A great example of Bonnes-Mares in the making. 2025-2075. **96+.**

2012 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Dujac

There is only a single, four hundred liter, new barrel of the RSV in the Dujac cellars this year. The wine was a touch reduced when I was here in mid-November, but offers up considerable aromatic promise in its classy blend of raspberries, red plums, exotic spice tones, duck, a beautifully complex base of minerality, nutskins and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very pure and tangy, with stunning transparency, a great sappy core of red fruit, very suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and vibrant finish. Man, this is going to be a great wine! 2025-2075. **97-98.**

2012 Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

There are only two barrels of Chambertin (out of a normal crop of four) in 2012 at Domaine Dujac, which is really a pity, as this wine is already hard enough to find in the market. The young and very classy bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, incipient notes of meatiness, a beautifully complex base of soil and a nice framing of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is [pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with outstanding mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and a very, very long, shapely and still quite primary finish. This will be a great wine as well. 2025-2075. **96+.**

Domaine du Clos des Lambrays (Morey St. Denis)

Thierry Brouin was one of the most downhearted producers based in the Côte de Nuits that I visited on my November trip- not because of the quality of his 2012s, which are absolutely stellar- but, rather because he got hit just about as hard as anyone in the northern half of the Côte d'Or with low yields. I fully expected that there would not be much white wine from the two lovely premier crus in Puligny that the domaine owns, and this is indeed the case, as the crop is down in their two parcels of vines in Folatières and Caillerets by fully eighty percent in 2012. In fact, Monsieur Brouin has had to blend the tiny production from the two vineyards and make a single, blended Puligny "Premier Cru" bottling, as he simply did not have enough wine to make a viable cuvée on its own. Even with making a single wine from the two Puligny parcels this year, Domaine des Lambrays only has enough three barrels of the wine to offer out to a thirsty clientele. The red wine side of the ledger is not a whole lot better in 2012, as the flowering was just brutal in their vineyards and the red grape harvest was down by fully fifty-five percent at the domaine. These are the kind of red wine production numbers that are far more typical in the Côte de Beaune in 2012 than in the Côte de Nuits! However, the one silver lining here in all these clouds is that the four wines in the Domaine des Lambrays' lineup of 2012s are all stunning wines, with the village wine and premier cru (both of which take a sizable portion of the young vines from the Clos des Lambrays) are both utterly brilliant- in large part because of the devastatingly tiny crop load. I have never tasted a previous vintage here where the two entry

level reds were so stunning and they are very much worthy of addition to any well-stocked Burgundy cellar, if one is lucky enough to come across bottles. And the Clos des Lambrays itself? Pure magic. Interestingly, the 2012 Clos des Lambrays comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol in this vintage- and the wine was not chapitalized- so, one can see that ripeness was not a problem here, and the wine is so suave, so pure and so strikingly soil-driven this year as to surely be destined to be ranked up there with the very greatest vintages ever produced in the Clos.



2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Premier Cru”- Domaine du Clos des Lambrays

The 2012 Premier Cru Puligny bottling had been bottled at the end of September, right before the start of the 2013 harvest. The wine was showing very well in November and is a beautifully intense wine that shows no signs of over-concentration, as it offers up a very, very pretty and complex nose of peach, apple, a touch of almond paste, fruit skins, chalky soil and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows lovely supporting acids, with good mid-palate richness, nascent complexity and excellent focus and grip on the long and succulent finish. Fine juice that will drink well right from the moment of release. 2014-2025. **92.**

2012 Morey St. Denis- Domaine du Clos des Lambrays

This may well be the best village wine I tasted on the entire trip! The beautiful nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebirds, sweet black

plums, cocoa and a superb base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and supremely elegant, with a sappy core of black fruit, great transparency and a very, very long, modestly tannic finish. Great AC. 2017-2040. **91+**.

2012 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru”- Domaine du Clos des Lambrays

The Domaine des Lambrays 2012 Premier Cru Morey is also a stellar example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a gorgeous aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, pomegranate, cocoa, woodsmoke, gamebird and again, a simply stunningly complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is very pure and full-bodied, with great delineation and balance, a sappy core of fruit, silky tannins and stunning focus and grip on the seamless and very long, classy finish. Simply gorgeous! 2018-2045+. **93**.

2012 Clos des Lambrays- Domaine du Clos des Lambrays

The 2012 Clos des Lambrays was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit and was not singing with the same perfect pitch as the *villages* and premier cru cuvées, but this is clearly a legendary vintage for the Clos. Underneath the whiff of reduction is a very nascently complex and refined wine, offering up scents of black cherries, blueberries, espresso, kaleidoscopic dark soil tones, woodsmoke, fresh herb tones, incipient notes of the quail to come and a discreet base of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and still quite primary, with a rock solid core of fruit, outstanding focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and stunning length and grip on the seamless finish. A glorious vintage for this great *terroir*. 2022-2075+. **96**.

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

Laurent Lignier has fashioned some of the very finest wines I had the pleasure to taste from the 2012 vintage and it seems pretty clear to me that these are the greatest wines he has yet produced since taking over the reins of the family domaine several years back. Across the board these are stunningly pure, velvety wines of striking soil signature and the most sophisticated and refined structures one can imagine in young red Burgundies- in short, this is a vintage of legendary proportions at Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils. Laurent Lignier’s strategy in the last several years to expand the domaine’s lineup with a wider range of village wines from particularly good lieux à dits and old vines has really paid off in the 2012 vintage, as this is a vintage where wines from choice village parcels will drink and age like top flight premier crus, and there is a very stunning array in the Lignier cellars awaiting bottling. I also particularly liked the Gevrey-Chambertin “la Justice”, the Nuits St. Georges “les Poisets” and the Pommard “Chanlins” from this category- but, this is not to say that the old vines from the family’s own village parcels are also not absolutely stellar this year. At the premier cru level, each and every Lignier wine this year is superb and a striking example of its respective terroir, with all of the depth of sappy fruit and stunning transparency that is going to make this vintage so revered in the decades to come. With all the old vines that Laurent Lignier works with, it is not surprising that yields here in 2012 averaged only twenty-two hectoliters per hectare. The cellars had not yet been racked at the time of my visit, but with malolactic fermentations having generally finished here between April and the end of June, the wines were showing beautifully (with one or two exceptions, which were slight reduced) and there is no doubt that this is a magical vintage for the Lignier family.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The domaine’s Bourgogne rouge bottling has been augmented in 2012 by a second parcel of vines in the village of Nuits St. Georges (to go along with their previous plot of Bourgogne

level vines in Chambolle) and Laurent was not yet decided if he would blend the two together this year, or bottle them separately, as even at the Bourgogne level, the signature of *terroir* in these wines is pretty special! This is the note on the Nuits vines, which offer up a lovely bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, cocoa, a fine base of soil and a nice topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and nicely tangy, with good focus and impressive complexity for its level, with just a wisp of tannin and very good length and grip. A serious example of Bourgogne. 2014-2020. **88.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

As I learned last year, the Ligniers' parcel of forty-five to fifty year-old vines for their Chambolle AC lies in the *lieu à dit* of La Bussière, which is the same vineyard from which Domaines Dujac and Taupenot-Merme have their Chambolle *villages* parcels as well. The 2012 Chambolle *villages* is quintessential Chambolle, wafting from the glass in a red fruity and very refined nose of cherries, strawberries, roses, a lovely base of soil and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and tangy, with a juicy core of red fruit, excellent transparency, ripe tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and vibrant finish. I love the inner core of energy that this wine displays. 2019-2035+. **90.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The two Gevrey-Chambertin *villages* bottlings that I tasted here both finished up their malos on the early side in January of 2013, so the wines were really singing at the time of my visit. The wine offers up a very elegant bouquet of cherries, red plums, cocoa, a signature of soil, incipient notes of grilled meat and a dollop of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and has a nice core of sappy fruit, with fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and balance and a long, bright and bouncy finish. This is a beautiful village wine. 2018-2035+. **90.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “La Justice”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2012 La Justice from Laurent Lignier is outstanding and clearly of premier cru quality in this vintage! The dynamite bouquet offers up a sappy blend of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, cocoa and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very, very refined, with excellent, sappy mid-palate concentration, very suave tannins and lovely balance on the very long, focused and tangy finish. This is really a beautiful bottle of Gevrey. 2019-2040. **91+.**

2012 Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Since the 2009 vintage, when Laurent Lignier began purchasing grapes from this particular *lieu à dit*, there have been two distinct bottlings of Morey *villages* from the domaine. This is a very well-situated parcel, which is also farmed by Cécile Tremblay and which lies right next door to her new winery, and Laurent Lignier has made a really lovely example in 2012. The bouquet is a superb blend of red and black cherries, complex soil nuances, fresh thyme, gamebirds, espresso and just a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthful (the malo was later to finish here than with the two Gevrey ACs above), with a fine core of fruit, moderate tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and elegant finish. I may be underrating this wine a touch, but it is a bit crankier being tasted than the two Gevrees. 2019-2035+. **90+?**

2012 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

This is the original Morey *villages* bottling from the domaine, which hails primarily from a very old parcel of vines planted in 1936 in the *lieu à dit* of Bas Chenevery (the top section of this vineyard is premier cru) which lies right below Les Millandes, with a small parcel of vines in

neighboring Clos Solon also added to the blend. The 2012 version is absolutely classic, offering up a pure and stunning young nose of black cherries, plums, cocoa, a superb soil signature, woodsmoke and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very pure and magically sappy at the core, with great fidelity to its underlying soil, suave tannins, lovely acidity and superb energy and grip on the very long and classy finish. It really is amazing that we are still tasting the village wines here- given the consistent quality and complexity of these last few wines! 2020-2040+. **91.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Poisets”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The parcel of vines in les Poisets that Laurent Lignier purchases grapes from were planted in 1947, with this well-situated *lieu à dit* lying just below the premier cru of Les Cailles on the slope. This is another absolutely stellar village wine with premier cru aspirations, offering up a superb and quite black fruity bouquet of dark berries, espresso, gamebirds, dark soil tones, a nice touch of fresh herbs and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very soil-driven, with a fine core, ripe tannins and a very long, pure and tangy finish. Another stellar *villages*! 2020-2045+. **91.**

2012 Pommard “Chanlins”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

This fine new addition, commencing in the 2009 vintage, comes from the *villages* section of Chanlins and is the oldest parcel of vines that the Ligniers work with, with all the vines in their section planted in either 1931 or 1937. There are only two barrels of this fine wine in 2012 (out of five barrels in a normal crop) and it is stellar, offering up a deep and classy nose of red and black cherries, dark plums, espresso, woodsmoke, gamebird, a wonderful base of soil and just a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with superb focus and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and outstanding length and grip on the primary and very classy finish. The texture of the tannins here is not as suave as in the Côte de Nuits, but they are very well-integrated and this wine will come around brilliantly with bottle age. 2020-2045+. **91.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Ligniers only own .2 hectares of vines in this terrific premier cru, which lies below Bonnes-Mares on the slope and really does share quite a bit of stylistic similarities with its grand cru neighbor. The 2012 version from Laurent Lignier is stellar, wafting from the glass in a very lovely bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, violets, cocoa, gamebirds, vinesmoke and a first class base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with great purity of fruit and transparency of soil, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the poised and very long finish. This is very classy juice! 2022-2050+. **92+.**

2012 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2012 La Riotte from Domaine Lignier is excellent and very red fruity this year on both the nose and palate, with great transparency and inherent elegance. The superb nose offers up a lovely blend of cherries, pomegranate red currants, gamebirds, superb soil tones, woodsmoke and mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very svelte, with a fine core, great balance and backend soil drive, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the finish. Another stellar wine. 2020-2050. **92+.**

2012 Morey St. Denis “les Chaffots”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2012 les Chaffots was the one wine that was rather reduced and cranky at the time of my visit, so I did not take a precise note on the wine. The malo was very late here and this wine has not yet settled back into form, but it is very deep, black fruity and transparent, with fine-

grained tannins and a very long, deep and vibrant finish. I am sure this will be lovely and should probably rate in the **91-92+** range when it is back on form.

2012 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The old vines here were planted in the same year as the oldest vines in the Morey AC bottling- 1936. The 2012 version is going to be a legendary effort for this wine, as it offers up a deep, pure and utterly superb nose of black cherries, plums, cocoa, gamebirds, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, mustard seed and a deft framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with ripe, utterly suave tannins, great focus and grip, tangy acids and stunning length on the perfectly balanced and very soil-driven finish. Great juice! 2022-2055+. **94.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Perrière”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

It is funny that even after all these years of visiting and drinking Burgundy, there are always vineyards that I do not cross paths with very often. Such is the case with the lovely Gevrey premier cru of la Perrière, which lies below Mazis-Chambertin on the slope in a small band of premier crus that includes Clos Prieur and Cherbaudes. For the 2012, Laurent Lignier has two barrels of this superb wine, one of which was raised in a used Hospices de Nuits barrel and hence shows a bit more “cedary” oak spice than the other non-Hospices premier crus in the cellar. The bouquet is outstanding, offering up a deep and very pure nose of red and black cherries, espresso, black minerality, grilled meats, woodsmoke, mustard seed and aforementioned cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a superb core of pure fruit, ripe tannins and great focus and grip on the very, very long, tangy and complex finish. What a beautiful bottle of Gevrey! 2020-2050. **94.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Domaine Lignier 2012 Combottes is another stellar example of the vintage. The superb nose wafts from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, violets, a touch of venison, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very classy, with a lovely core of sappy fruit, superb soil inflection, excellent, suave structure and a very, very long, soil-driven and ripely tannic finish. A classic in the making. 2022-2050. **94.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Cuvée Didiers”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier is so discreet with his use of new oak that this very nicely balanced Hospices de Nuits bottling really comes off as almost overtly new oaky in style- despite the wine showing quite lovely depth and stuffing to effortlessly carry its new wood component! This will be a very, very good wine as well, as it offers up a complex bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, dark soil tones, a bit of bonfire, gamebirds and a generous, but well-measured base of toasty, spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine complexity and focus, ripe, well-integrated tannins and very fine length and grip on the youthful and well-balanced finish. Another lovely bottle in the making. 2022-2050. **92.**

2012 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2012 Lignier Charmes-Chambertin is outstanding, soaring from the glass in a very deep, complex and elegant mélange of cherries, strawberries, red plums, roses, cocoa, gamebird, beautiful soil tones, a dollop of fresh herbs and a judicious base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and unrepentantly elegant in profile, with a sappy core of fruit, beautiful transparency, fine-grained tannins and superb length and grip on the tangy and seamless finish. Great juice. 2025-2075. **95+.**

2012 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2012 Clos de la Roche from Laurent Lignier is a brilliant example of the vintage. The superb and primary nose offers up scents of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, smoke, gamebirds, espresso, a nice touch of vanillin oak and a very, very complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and absolutely rock solid at the core, with ripe, suave and firm tannins, good acids and outstanding focus and balance on the very, very long and elegant finish. This wine has enormous potential, but keep it tucked away for ten to twelve years in the cellar and really let it reach its zenith! 2025-2075. **97.**

Domaine Ponsot (Morey St. Denis)

Laurent Ponsot has made stellar 2012s, with a sumptuousness and opulence that are so typical of his greatest vintages. As is his wont, he began harvesting quite a bit later than all of his neighbors in Morey St. Denis, with picking commencing in his Côte de Nuits parcels around October 2nd or 3rd of 2012. I am not sure if the fruit he obtains from his “joint ventures” with “friends” in the Côte de Beaune was picked a bit sooner than the Côte de Nuits parcels, but there is a consistent style to all of the wines in the Ponsot cellars this year that suggests that later harvesting is part of the agreement between Laurent and vignerons in the south that he purchases grapes from as well. A couple of the wines that I tasted on this visit were a bit too ripe for my tastes- perhaps pushing the envelope towards chocolaty sur maturité aromatics, but I tend to be more sensitive to these tones in a young wine than most and a couple of good friends who I visited the domaine with on this trip did not have similar observations for the one or two wines where I thought this to be the case. But, be that as it may, it is only a few wines that I thought might be pushing the envelope a bit too much in 2012, with the remainder of the range absolutely stellar and there is little doubt that fans of this great estate are going to be absolutely ecstatic with the quality and style of these monumental 2012s. I did not taste the entire range in the Ponsot cellars in 2012, as the yields here are down as dramatically as anywhere else in the Côte de Nuits, and it seemed more polite to simply be content with working through a very representative range of these stunning 2012s. There is only a single barrel of Montrachet in the cellars this year- bringing to twelve the number of grand crus now produced by Laurent Ponsot- and I did not taste it on this visit, but based on how brilliant the Ponsot Corton-Charlemagne is in this vintage, I have to imagine that those well-heeled clients who are lucky enough to find a few bottles of the Montrachet are going to be very happy indeed with the results!

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Ponsot

No new oak is a recipe that totally appeals to my aesthetic sensibilities with Corton-Charlemagne, and this is exactly how Laurent Ponsot raises his example. The 2012 is an utterly brilliant wine in the making and was one of the most stunning white wines I tasted on my entire trip in November. The deep and fabulous nose soars from the glass in a complex blend of pear, apple, white flowers, a very complex base of white soil tones, a nice dollop of fresh almond, spring flowers and a gently musky topnote redolent of honeysuckle. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and complex, with a great core of fruit, superb soil inflection, very suave, seamless acids and simply brilliant length and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is a great, great bottle of Corton Charlie! 2016-2040. **96.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2012 Chambolle “Charmes” from Domaine Ponsot is a stunning wine and must emphatically not be overlooked in the quest to try and find some of the magical grand crus in this

vintage. The bouquet is a splendid, pure and sappy mélange of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil tones, a touch of nutskin and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with a velvety and sappy core, suave tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the very, very long and opulent finish. There is a sense of purity and precision here that is the absolute epitome of the greatness of the 2012 vintage. 2020-2050. **92.**

2012 Morey St. Denis 1er Cru “Cuvée Alouettes”- Domaine Ponsot

Laurent Ponsot explained that he named his Morey Premier Cru bottling “Cuvée Alouettes” as he wished to retain the Clos des Monts Luisants name solely for his great white wine produced here from very old aligoté vines, rather than have both a red and a white with the same vineyard name. The *monopole* Clos des Monts Luisants is 2.5 hectares of vines in total, with one hectare planted to aligoté, one hectare of pinot noir entitled to premier cru status (and from which this bottling originates) and half a hectare of pinot noir vines considered part of Clos de la Roche. The 2012 Cuvée Alouettes is another absolutely stunning premier cru that has aspirations to grand cru quality in this vintage, offering up a beautiful bouquet of black cherries, dark plums, dark chocolate, gamebirds, woodsmoke, just a touch of violet and a superb base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, very pure and sappy, with great focus and grip, very good acids and a very long, suavely tannic and complex finish. Another superb example of the vintage. 2020-2050. **92+.**

2012 Corton “Cuvée Baurdon”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2012 Corton “Cuvée Baurdon” from Domaine Ponsot is another superb bottle in the making, but it does not quite share the same velvety texture to the tannins as the wines from the Côte de Nuits. This cuvée is made up of grapes from four different parcels on the hill of Corton, with Laurent Ponsot joking that “I cannot tell you which *lieux à dits* the grapes come from, as then you could guess who I am working with in Corton.” The bouquet on the 2012 is deep and sappy, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, black plums, chocolate, dark soil tones (very much reminiscent of Renardes) and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush on the attack, with a superb core of fruit, lovely soil signature and a very long, ripely tannic and still quite primary finish. This will be a lovely bottle of Corton and should age for a very long time. 2025-2065. **93.**

2012 Charmes-Chambertin “Cuvée des Merles”- Domaine Ponsot

The Charmes-Chambertin *chez* Ponsot hails from the parcel of vine here that lie closest to the Morey St. Denis border, and ever since the first vintage here in 1999, I have found this to be one of the very best examples of Charmes produced. The 2012 is a great wine in the making, soaring from the glass in a complex and sappy constellation of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, grilled meat, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of fresh herbs in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and opulent on the attack, with a superb core of sappy fruit, very suave tannins, good acidity and excellent length and grip on the focused and utterly complete finish. A great wine from an under-appreciated *terroir*. 2025-2075. **94+.**

2012 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Ponsot

The 2012 Griotte-Chambertin from Laurent Ponsot is another one of the ringing successes in the cellars this year, as the wine offers up a dramatic bouquet of black cherries, plums, grilled meat, cocoa, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a really lovely topnote that I can only describe as “sweet herbs”. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with great focus and balance, impressive, nascent complexity, ripe, refined tannins and

exceptional length and grip on the young and oh, so promising finish. This will be a legendary vintage for the Ponsot Griotte. 2025-2075. **94+**.

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Ponsot

The 2012 Chapelle-Chambertin *chez* Ponsot was one of the wines that I felt was pushing the limits of ripeness a touch, but this may well just be a stage in the wine's evolution and it may never stray over the line into the realm of *sur maturité*. The very ripe nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, grilled game, black minerality and a bit of a balsamic tone in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and voluptuous to the core, with ripe tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and ripely velvety finish. This will be a superb wine if it does not stray over the line into overripe tones, and if it maintains its position on this side of the border, then my score will prove to be unduly conservative. 2022-2055. **93**.

2012 Chambertin "Cuvée Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Ponsot

I may have slight misgivings about the Chapelle in 2012, but I have none whatsoever for this glorious Chambertin, which may well be the finest I have yet had the pleasure to taste from Laurent Ponsot. This wine has it all- a deep, pure and marvelously complex nose of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark chocolate, a touch of currant leaf, black minerality and a fine, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nascently complex and gorgeously balanced, with a sappy core, great soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and stunning length and grip on the focused and utterly refined finish. A great, great wine. 2023-2075. **95**.

2012 Clos Vougeot "Cuvée Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Ponsot

The 2012 Clos Vougeot is another wine that pushes the envelope in ripeness to my palate, but it is hovering on the boundary and could go either way as the years unfold. The very ripe nose is certainly deep, sappy and complex in its mélange of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, a fine base of soil, venison and woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite a bit more chewy in its tannic texture than most of the grand crus here in the cellars, with an opulent core of fruit, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the powerful finish. This is really very long and focused on the backend, and if it steers clear of the dark side of the ripeness border, it will be a great Clos Vougeot and my score will seem completely too conservative. 2022-2060. **92-94+?**.

2012 Clos St. Denis "Trés Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Ponsot

I love the 2012 Clos St. Denis this year, which is so deep that it is the vinous equivalent of a black hole. The superb nose soars from the glass in a youthful mix of dark berries, black cherries, dark plums, woodsmoke, gamebirds and espresso. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and strikingly mineral in personality for such a sappy young wine, with a rock solid core of fruit, stunning focus and grip, very fine-grained tannins and magical length and grip on the seamless and utterly magical finish. This is the king in the Ponsot cellar for me this year. 2025-2075. **98**.

2012 Clos de la Roche "Cuvée Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Ponsot

Not that the 2012 Ponsot Clos de la Roche is a slouch by any stretch of the imagination, as this too is a brilliant wine in the making. The nose seems a bit riper at this stage of its evolution than the stunning Clos St. Denis, but it is a bottomless and very complex blend of sappy black cherries, black plums, espresso, woodsmoke, dark chocolate, roasted venison and a very complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerfully built, with a sappy core, superb soil signature, ripe, velvety tannins and superb length and grip on the still very primary finish. Perhaps over the coming decades the Clos de la Roche will close the gap

with the 2012 Clos St. Denis, as there is clearly enormous potential here, and it will be fascinating to see how these two titans unfold in the fullness of time. 2025-2075. **96+**.

Domaine Cecile Trémbly (Morey St. Denis)

I was very happy to visit Cecile Trémbly this past November and see that she is expecting a second child in 2014. As her daughter, Eleanor, was born in July of 2012, we must assume that 2014 will be another magnificent vintage. Madame Trémbly is very happy with the quality of her wines in 2012, though the constant battle against mildew and oidium over the course of the summer kept her out in the vines when she was quite far along in her pregnancy with Eleanor, and I am sure that it was no easy task working the vines at eight and nine months pregnant in the summer of 2012! Happily, at least the domaine was spared the added problems with hail in 2012, as it was only the poor flowering that adversely affected the yields here and Madame Trémbly observed that her yields had been about the same in 2010, 2011, 2012 and again in 2013, averaging around twenty-seven hectoliters per hectare. Not generous by any stretch of the imagination, but certainly better than the horror story yields that some vignerons in the Côte de Beaune had to endure. Most of the cellar had not yet been racked at the time of my visit in mid-November, with the wines resting still on their fine lees, and a few were a bit reduced. Despite the rather inopportune timing on a couple of these wines, it was quite clear that the Domaine Trémbly wines are stellar examples of the 2012 vintage and, as is so often the case here, this was one of the most beautiful and exciting range of wines I tasted during my trip. I did not taste the entire range on my visit, as a couple of wines had already just been racked and were not in the mood for tasting. These are stunning wines in 2012, but of course, that has been the case here for many vintages in a row now!

2012 Bourgogne “la Croix Blanche” Rouge- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge from Cecile Trémbly is a very lovely example of the vintage, and despite the wine being just a touch reduced, it was quite easy to appreciate its potential. The bouquet is a pretty blend of plums, black cherries, chocolate, woodsmoke and a nice dollop of soil. On the palate the wine is fullish, round and velvety, with a sappy core, a nice touch of ripe tannin on the backend and very good length grip on the classy finish. A fine example. 2014-2020+. **88+**.

2012 Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard”- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

The 2012 Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard” was also just a touch reduced in November, but a bit of swirling in the glass unlocked a fine bottle in the making, as the bouquet offers up a very fine blend of black plums, dark berries, gamebirds, cocoa, a beautiful base of soil and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very pure and again, very velvety in texture on the attack, with a fine core and impressive, limestone drive on the long, tangy and suavely tannic finish. This is a very, very classy *villages*! 2020-2040. **90+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cabottes”- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

The les Cabottes bottling of Chambolle *villages* is comprised of small parcels of vines in three different *lieux à dits*, les Fremières, aux Exchanges and les Maladières. The first two lie up slope, just below the premier crus on the north side of the village (with half of aux Exchanges actually ranked as premier cru), but les Maladières lies at the base of the slope and abuts the *Route Nationale*. Cecile notes that she uses the vines on the lower part of her parcel in les Maladières for her Bourgogne, and only the top half of the parcel for the Chambolle bottling. This is really a lovely and quite black fruity bottle of Chambolle in 2012, wafting from the glass

in a complex and very pure blend of black cherries, dark berries, coffee bean, a complex base of soil, incipient notes of gamebird, a touch of mustard seed and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and silky on the attack, with lovely mid-palate depth, striking soil signature, suave tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very long and tangy finish. A beautiful wine. 2020-2040. **91.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Murgers”- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

There are only two barrels of Murgers in the Trémbly cellars in 2012, with one of them new, so this was raised in a touch more new oak than is customary in this vintage. This is a flat out gorgeous example of the vintage (and very, very reminiscent of Henri Jayer’s version back in the day!), soaring from the glass in a pure and vibrant blend of black plums, black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebirds, a complex base of dark soil tones, a touch of nutskin and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, outstanding focus and balance and excellent grip on the nascently complex and very, very pure and classy finish. Great juice. 2020-2050. **93.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Feusselottes”- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

Cecile Trémbly’s father split this plot of Feusselottes with Dr. Georges Mugneret back in 1985, so the two domaines’ parcels of vines lie right next to each other in the vineyard. The 2012 has turned out beautifully well, delivering a deep and very classic aromatic constellation of plums, black cherries, cocoa, a beautiful base of soil, violets and a nice touch of nutty new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure, with a great core, impeccable focus and balance, ripe, velvety tannins and a very, very long, youthful and vibrant finish. This is going to be a beautiful bottle of Feusselottes. 2020-2050. **93+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Rouges Dessus”- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

Les Rouges Dessus is at the top of the slope in Flagey, up above Beaumonts and is a very cool *climat*, which always give it a quite black fruity personality. The 2012 is true to form and quite fine, wafting from the glass in a classic blend of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, dark soil tones, a bit of Echézeaux-like bonfire and a dollop of lead pencil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality this year, with a fine core, ripe, firm tannins and a very long, tangy and quite mineral finish. This is a lovely bottle in the making, but it does not quite show the same gorgeous sappiness and seductive structures as the Murgers and Feusselottes this year (at least not yet). 2022-2050. **92+.**

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

I always love Cecile Trémbly’s version of Chapelle-Chambertin, which I rank right up there at the pinnacle of this great vineyard alongside that of the Domaines Trapet and Rossignol-Trapet, and the 2012 will be another absolutely stellar example of this magical *terroir*. Madame Trémbly observed that “because the stems were so perfectly ripe in 2012, I used ninety-five percent whole clusters for the Chapelle this year”, and the wine was showing stunning potential at the time of my visit. The deep and very black fruity nose offers up a precise and vibrant mélange of cassis, dark berries, incipient notes of grilled meat, espresso, fresh herb tones, a very complex base of dark soil and a nice framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved in personality, with a rock solid core of potentially velvety fruit, gorgeous transparency, fine-grained tannins and exceptional length and grip on the tangy and laser-like finish. This will be a great, great wine in a dozen years or so. 2025-2075. **95+.**

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine Cecile Trémbly

Cecile Trémbly’s parcel of Echézeaux lies in the *lieu à dit* of Du Dessus (right above Grands Echézeaux), and her vines are approximately fifty years of age. In many vintages, I have

a slight preference for her gorgeous Chapelle-Chambertin over her equally fine Echézeaux, but in 2012, there is little doubt that this is the queen of the cellar! The young and absolutely stunning wine offers up an utterly classic bouquet of black plums, dark berries, cocoa, woodsmoke, a touch of coffee bean, gamebirds, a fabulously complex base of dark soil tones and a lovely framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and brilliantly pure on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, stunning soil inflection and great length and grip on the ripely tannic, classically structured finish. A brilliant bottle of young Echézeaux in the making from Cecile Trémblay in 2012! 2025-2075. 96+.



Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier's Château de Chambolle-Musigny.

Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod (Chambolle-Musigny)

I had thought that I would never see the Domaine Barthod cellars less full than I did in the very short crop of 2010, but Ghislaine Barthod reports that here yields in 2012 were down another fifteen percent from the very short crop of 2010. Of course, all one has to do is walk around the corner to the other end of the cellars here and see just how much shorter the crop was for her husband, Louis Boillot, who has so many parcels in the Côte de Beaune, and one realizes that- all things considered- Madame Barthod has been relatively lucky with her yields in this vintage! This is an amazing range of wines in 2012, with the purity, refinement and intensity

of flavor that only the greatest of years can deliver, and Ghislaine Barthod has crafted absolutely reference point examples of this great year. Like the very finest wines of the vintage, there is a depth and purity to the velvety fruit of the Barthod wines that is absolutely magical, and yet, each and every wine is not defined by its gorgeous fruit tones, but by its utterly pristine expression of its underlying terroir and its magically suave structural components. One can simply not escape the conclusion that the 2012s are the very finest wines Ghislaine Barthod has yet fashioned, and she has already had a long and very illustrious career in Chambolle-Musigny that is rich with great wines, but, 2012 is something extra special here! There will not be a lot of wine to go around here this year, but if one is lucky enough to be offered any wine from Madame Barthod in 2012, do not hesitate to say “yes” as quickly as possible and take each and every bottle offered!

2012 Bourgogne “Bons Batons”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Barthod Bourgogne *rouge* is a very pretty and succulent wine, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, pomegranate, violets, cocoa, a lovely base of soil and a nice touch of Chambolle-like mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, juicy and wide open, with a lovely core of fruit, impressive soil signature, just a touch of tannin and lovely length and grip on the classy finish. Fine juice that will drink well beyond its pay grade! 2014-2025. **88.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Chambolle AC *chez* Barthod was a bit more reserved at the time of my visit than the utterly charming Bourgogne, but it too shared the same great purity and transparency. The lovely nose is a youthful blend of cherries, red berries, fresh herb tones, a fine base of soil nuances and a nice, youthful touch of pepper in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and youthfully structured, with a fine core, lovely soil signature and very good length and grip on the moderately tannic, tangy and well-balanced finish. This will be a lovely wine in a few years. 2019-2040. **89+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Combottes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Barthod Combottes is very pure and red fruity this year, wafting from the glass in a perfumed and very classy nose of cherries, blood orange, beautiful minerality, a touch of nutskin, peonies and again, just a whisper of youthful pepperiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a fine core, outstanding transparency, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy, pure and classy finish. This is really a lovely rendition of Combottes. 2018-2045. **91+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Chatelots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Chatelots is another absolutely gorgeous, pure and classic bottle of Chambolle, but it is not quite as forward and charming out of the blocks as the Combottes. The superb nose delivers an aromatic constellation of cherries, pomegranate, coffee, beautiful soil tones, mustard seed and a nice touch of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with a great signature of soil, ripe, well-integrated tannins and superb focus and grip on the very long, nascently complex and utterly refined finish. A beautiful bottle in the making. 2020-2045. **92.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Beaux Bruns”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Beaux Bruns from Ghislaine Barthod is another beautiful example of the vintage, with gorgeous fruit coupled to stellar transparency and a very elegant structure. The beautiful nose wafts from the glass in a sappy mélange of red plums, cherries, cocoa, complex

soil tones, just a dollop of fresh herbs and a nice topnote of smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with a sappy core, stunning transparency, very suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy, pure and vibrant finish. A beautiful bottle of Chambolle. 2019-2045+. **93.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Gruenchers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 is clearly the finest rendition of Gruenchers I have yet had the pleasure to taste from Madame Barthod! The stellar nose delivers a blend of red and black cherries, pomegranate, nutskin, raw cocoa, a beautiful base of soil, just a touch of vanillin oak and a pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with laser-like focus, great minerality, fine-grained tannins and stunning backend energy and purity on the very, very long, magical finish. What a great young bottle of this stunning *terroir*! 2020-2050. **94.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 Barthod les Baudes is a touch more reserved in style than the Gruenchers, but it too shares that wonderful synthesis of sappy fruit and stunning transparency. The classic nose wafts from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, cocoa, a touch of nutskin, a lovely base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very sappy at the core, with ripe, very suave tannins, excellent focus and structure and a very long, youthful and very classy finish. This too is going to be a dynamite wine. 2021-2045+. **93+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 les Charmes from Madame Barthod is again, pure, sappy and unrepentantly elegant on both the nose and palate. The gorgeous bouquet delivers a fine mélange of cherries, red plums, cocoa, violets, chalky soil tones, a dollop of mustard seed and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and starts off life with a lovely sense of reserve, with outstanding mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins, impeccable balance and excellent length and grip on the focused and soil-driven finish. Another great wine in the making. 2021-2045+. **94.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” - Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Ghislaine Barthod’s 2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” is another beautifully sappy, pure and transparent young wine. The stunning nose offers up a perfumed blend of sappy red and black cherries, pomegranate, a touch of chocolate, woodsmoke, a stunningly complex base of soil, a touch of orange zest and a whisper of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and multi-dimensional, with a great sappy core, fine-grained tannins, flawless focus and grip, tangy acids and a very long, pure and utterly refined finish of stunning nascent complexity and verve. Brilliant wine. 2021-2050. **94+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Veroilles”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

I always feel a bit bad for the placement of the Veroilles bottling in the presentation in the cellars of the Barthod premier crus, as it inevitably is sandwiched in between les Fuées and les Cras, and it really does struggle a bit (unfairly) to hold its own against those two magical *terroirs* in the Barthod lineup. The 2012 Veroilles is a very, very good bottle in the making, wafting from the glass in a classic and nicely reserved nose of cherries, blood orange, gamebirds, a touch of white pepper and a beautifully transparent base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly masculine in structure, with fine purity down to the core, superb soil signature, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the tangy and chewy finish. I am probably underestimating this wine just a touch, but it is after all sandwiched between two utterly magical Chambolles this year! 2022-2045. **91+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2012 les Cras from Domaine Barthod is utterly stunning, offering up a pure, deep and beautifully reserved aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, a touch of blood orange, gamebirds, brilliantly complex minerality, roses and a touch of high-end mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with striking transparency, flawless focus and balance, great backend mineral drive, suave tannins and stunning length and grip on the very vibrant and classic finish. A great, great wine in the making! 2020-2060. **95+**.

Domaine Louis Boillot (Chambolle-Musigny)

Louis Boillot has been on a tear of late and has been fashioning some of the most beautifully elegant wines to be found anywhere in the Côte d'Or, but it seems quite clear to me that he has never made more stunning wines than his range of 2012s and these wines are going to be worth every effort to find in the marketplace. As his is a domaine with holdings spread out almost evenly between the Côte de Nuits and the Côte de Beaune, tasting through the range here is a lovely and very immediate exercise in the differences that the climactic conditions produced in the textures of each section's wines. As Monsieur Boillot relates, “after the hail in the Côte de Beaune, the vines shut down for fifteen to eighteen days to recover, with their energies focused on rebuilding vegetation, rather than ripening grapes, and this is what accounts for the difference in textures of the tannins in the two Côtes.” It is really not possible to understate how hard the yields were hit here with the bad flowering followed by the three swaths of hail in the Côte de Beaune, as Monsieur Boillot figures that in his vineyards in Pommard and Volnay, he averaged between ten and fifteen hectoliters per hectare in 2012, with his parcel of old vines in Volnay “Caillerets” producing all of eight hectoliters per hectare! There are some pretty sobering quantities of some of the top crus from the Côte de Beaune in the Boillot cellars this year- two barrels of les Brouillards, a single barrel of la Croix Noire and only a half barrel of Caillerets, and there is only a modest improvement in yields here in 2013, so it is going to be rather difficult to find Louis Boillot wines in the next few vintages. But, they will be worth a very special search to latch onto, as Monsieur Boillot has fashioned some of the most stunningly pure and complex wines of the entire vintage in 2012 and there is not a single wine in his cellar that I would not be proud to add to my own in this year!

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot's 2012 Bourgogne rouge is another truly stunning example of its appellation in this vintage and is a wine that will drink with shocking elegance with a year or two's worth of bottle age. The very pure and refined nose wafts from the glass in a mix of cherries, pomegranate, cocoa, lovely soil tones and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is medium-full, suave and impressively soil-driven, with a nice core of fruit, a touch of tannin and lovely length and grip on the focused and surprisingly complex finish. A lovely example and a great value. 2015-2025. **88**.

2012 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Louis Boillot

Once again, this wine's quality simply transcends its appellation in 2012! As I have noted in the past, this wine hails from Brochon and is really the spitting image of a very stylish Gevrey. The really lovely nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of cherries, a touch of red currant, cocoa, black minerality, woodsmoke and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and silky on the attack, with fine focus and elegance, a nice sappy core, suave

tannins and a very long, tangy finish that closes with truly exceptional backend energy and grip. This is one of the great steals of the vintage! 2019-2035+. **90.**

2012 Fixin- Domaine Louis Boillot

There is only a single, lonely barrel of this lovely wine in the cellars this year, and this too will be one of the bargains of the year, as the vintage's has worked its magic with this wine and given it a lovely sprinkling of suave elegance that is rather uncharacteristic in young Fixin. The superb nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black cherries, currants, red plums, cocoa, a touch of meatiness, dark soil, smoke and violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and supremely elegant for Fixin *villages*, with a sappy core, modest tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. There are a shocking amount of fireworks going off in the glass here for Fixin AC! 2019-2035+. **90+.**

2012 Beaune "Epenottes"- Domaine Louis Boillot

As I have noted in the past, Monsieur Boillot's parcel of old vines here lie in the *villages* section of the vineyard, rather than further up the slope in the premier cru section. This too is an excellent wine, but here we find the more chewy style of tannins of the Côte de Beaune. The bouquet is deep, very pretty and quite sappy in its mélange of red and black cherries, cocoa, gamebirds, a fine base of soil, floral tones and just a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and sappy on the attack, with a fine core, ripe, substantial tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and well-balanced finish. All this fine wine will need is some time in the cellar. 2020-2040. **90+.**

2012 Volnay "les Grands Poisots"- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 Grands Poisots was a touch reduced at the time of my visit and was scheduled to be racked in the near future. Underneath is a lovely wine, offering up notes of cassis, black cherries, currant leaf, smoke and a complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with a very good core and soil signature, firm tannins and very good length and grip on the youthful finish. This will be quite good, but it too will need some bottle age. 2020-2040+. **90+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 Chambolle AC from Louis Boillot is a really beautiful village wine, wafting from the glass in a sappy and elegant aromatic blend of red and black cherries, cocoa, violets, chalky soil tones and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very refined, with a sappy core, great transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, pristine and complex finish. A very, very high class *villages*! 2019-2040. **91.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 Gevrey *villages* from Monsieur Boillot is a classic example of why it is imperative to buy further down the food chain in 2012, as this is a gorgeous bottle of young Burgundy. The stunning nose offers up a sappy blend of red and black cherries, red plums, dark soil, currant leaf, a dollop of meatiness, woodsmoke and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, very, very pure, with a great core, stunning transparency, suave tannins and great length and grip. Great juice! 2020-2045. **91+.**

2012 Volnay "les Angles"- Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot lost sixty percent of his production in 2012 to hail and poor flowering in les Angles. The resulting wine- what little of it there is in the cellar- is outstanding, offering up a deep and youthful bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, currant leaf, dark soil tones, incipient notes of gamebirds, espresso and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with chewy tannins, fine focus and nascent complexity and outstanding

length and grip on the youthful and very promising finish. This will be fine, fine juice in a decade. 2022-2060. **92+**.

2012 Volnay “les Brouillards”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 les Brouillards is a bit more closed at the present time than the les Angles, but it too is going to be a fine bottle of Volnay in the fullness of time. The youthful nose is a mélange of cassis, black cherries, raw cocoa, fresh herb tones, woodsmoke, a fine signature of soil and a bit of spicy oak in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved in style, with lovely mid-palate concentration, firm, ripe tannins and a very long, well-balanced finish. 2023-2060. **92+**.

2012 Volnay “les Caillerets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

It is hard to believe that there is only a single, half barrel of this wine, but that is how devastated Monsieur Boillot’s parcel in Caillerets was in 2012. The wine is a gorgeously pure and complex aromatic blend of dark berries, black cherries, currant leaf, superb minerality, espresso, a bit of gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very sappy at the core, with great focus and grip, ripe tannins and stunning length on the poised and youthfully complex finish. A great, great example of Caillerets and it is really a pity that there is so little of this wine to go around! 2025-2060. **94+**.

2012 Pommard “les Fremiers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 les Fremiers is another lovely wine in the making, without perhaps quite the same sappy depth at the core of the brilliant Caillerets, but with the elegance of the vintage leaving its fingerprints all over this superb young wine. The bouquet is a fine mix of red plums, black cherries, cocoa, dark soil tones, fresh herb tones, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and a long, transparent and nascently complex finish. This will be excellent. 2022-2055+. **92**.

2012 Pommard “la Croix Noire”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The sole barrel of 2012 la Croix Noire *chez* Boillot is outstanding. Monsieur Boillot chose to do the malo for this wine in a new barrel and then rack it into a two wine barrel for the remainder of its *elevage* and it will prove to have just the right dollop of new wood to it by the time it is ready for bottling. This is a great, great wine in the making and was clearly the finest example of Pommard I tasted on this trip. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a blend of red and black plums, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, gamebirds, currant leaf and a touch of toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very refined on the attack, with a great core of sappy fruit, flawless focus and balance, suave tannins and simply stunning length and grip on the ripely tannic and effortless finish. A legend in the making and one of the most hauntingly beautiful young Pommards I have ever had the pleasure to taste! 2023-2060. **95**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

There is a petition in front of *les officials* to elevate les Evocelles to premier cru status in the future, which I think is certainly warranted. The 2012 version from Monsieur Boillot would be a good example to show why this should be premier cru, as it offers up superb depth and complexity in its pure nose of cherries, red plums, cocoa, dark soil tones and sweet notes of mustard seed and thyme. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and very pure, with a lovely core of fruit, a fine sense of transparency, utterly suave tannins and great backend minerality on the long and tangy finish. A beautiful bottle in the making. 2020-2050. **92+**.

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Champonnets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 Boillot Champonnets is a bit more primary in profile than the Evocelles, but every bit as pure and promising. The exceptional bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of cherries, strawberries, red plums, cocoa, incipient notes of grilled meat, a fine base of soil, nutskins and just a whisper of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very sappy in the mid-palate, with lovely focus and grip, suave tannins and a very long, focused and classy finish. 2022-2060. **93.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cherbaudes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 vintage was the 100th birthday for these venerable old vines *chez* Boillot and to commemorate the vines hitting the century mark, the wine will only be bottled in magnum this year. I strongly advise folks to try and find a magnum or two of this great young Gevrey! The stunning nose delivers a very complex aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, violets, roses, a great base of soil and hints of both nutskin and mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely reserved in personality, with outstanding mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the transparent and supremely elegant finish. A great, great wine. 2025-2065. **94+.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2012 Pruliers is another outstanding example of the vintage, with the inherent elegance of 2012 quite evident here on both the nose and palate. The reserved and very classy bouquet is a blend of cherries, red plums, nutskins, gamebird, cocoa, roses, mustard seed, just a whisper of new wood and a gloriously pure base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and stunningly sappy right down to the heart of the wine, with fine-grained tannins, outstanding focus and grip on the very, very long, transparent and impressively elegant finish. Pruliers can often be a bit of a brute of a wine when it is young, but the elegance of 2012 has produced a wine that is uncharacteristically refined right out of the blocks. Great juice. 2025-2065. **94+.**

Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Frédéric Mugnier was in a good mood at the time of my visit, as he is very content with the style of his brilliant 2012s. Monsieur Mugnier reports that the Clos de la Maréchale was hailed on in 2012 on July the 4th (not the way I would have sought to mark the anniversary of American independence!) and fully sixty percent of the crop was lost in this vineyard as a result. As he noted, the Clos de la Maréchale is essentially comprised of two different soil types, with about three quarters of the surface area made up of a shallow base of clay on a hard base of oolitic limestone, whereas the southeastern corner of the vineyard has a much deeper layer of clay. Given the high limestone content just below the surface in the majority of the vineyard, it is not surprising that the white wine here has really come into its own as the vines are getting older, as the terroir is very well-suited to chardonnay. It is also not surprising that Monsieur Mugnier’s version of Clos de la Maréchale is such an elegant rendition of Nuits St. Georges, given this fine base of hard limestone under so much of the vineyard, and I suppose that this was also evident in the older vintages of the wine from Maison Faiveley as well, though I tended to drink those wines back in the day probably too early on in their evolutions to really appreciate this characteristic. In any case, one should really take a moment to applaud the fine job Monsieur Mugnier and his talented team have done with the Clos de la Maréchale since it has returned to the fold, and I am always so pleased to hear such positive comments about the wine from Burgundy lovers who have never even tasted a bottle of the domaine’s wines from

Chambolle-Musigny! Speaking of which, the Mugnier vineyards in Chambolle also suffered from the flowering difficulties of 2012, with yields down twenty-five to thirty percent from 2011, but at least they were nowhere near as draconian as the fourteen hectoliters per hectare of the Clos de la Maréchale in this vintage! The entire cellar had not yet been racked at the time of my visit, and one or two wines still had a bit of CO2 in solution from the end of the malos here, but generally, everything was showing very well at the time of my visit. These are classically beautiful and soil-driven examples of the vintage, with a great purity of fruit and silken structures that will carry them beautifully into the future.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The Domaine Mugnier 2012 Chambolle AC is really a pretty and succulent example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a bright and red fruity mélange of cherries, strawberries, woodsmoke, a lovely base of soil tones, incipient notes of gamebird and a nice topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and beautifully transparent, with a fine core of pure fruit, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2019-2040. **90+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2012 les Fuées from Monsieur Mugnier is gorgeous, delivering a very svelte, pure and soil-driven bottle of Chambolle. The superb bouquet is a fine aromatic mix of cherries, blood orange, nutskin, woodsmoke, gamebirds, fresh herb tones, coffee, just a touch of oak and a wonderful base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very intensely flavored, with a sappy core, striking soil signature, ripe, velvety tannins and great length and grip on the tangy and perfectly balanced finish. This is going to be stellar. 2022-2050+. **93**.

2012 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The Domaine Mugnier Bonnes-Mares still had a bit of CO2 in the barrels at the time of my visit, so the wine was not singing with quite the same perfect pitch as so many of the other wines in the cellar. Nevertheless, it is clear that this is going to be a superb wine, as it offers up a lovely, very red fruity bouquet of cherries, blood orange, strawberries, venison, complex minerality, a touch of bonfire and a classic topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a superb core, outstanding transparency, ripe, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and very tangy finish. A beautiful wine in the making. 2022-2060. **94**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2012 Mugnier les Amoureuses was in perfect form at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a complex and gorgeous aromatic constellation of cherries, *fraises du bois*, vinesmoke, very complex minerality, roses, gamebirds, coffee and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and strikingly transparent, with a lovely core, superb inner tension, laser-like focus and great length and grip on the perfectly balanced, suavely tannic and dancing finish. A great, great vintage for this iconic Chambolle bottling! 2022-2060. **95+**.

2012 Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2012 Musigny from Domaine Mugnier is another legend in the making. The stunning nose offers up a deep, pure and nascently complex mélange of red plums, cherries, nutskin, cocoa, gamebirds, a gloriously complex base of this inimitable soil, orange zest, pungent roses, mustard seed and a smoky topnote. Yum! On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully pure on the attack, with a sappy core of red fruit, brilliant soil inflection, magical

complexity, fine-grained tannins and superb focus and grip on the very, very long and utterly seamless finish. Pure magic in the making here. 2025-2075. **98.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Despite the brutally short yields here in 2012, the wine has turned out splendidly. The deep and complex nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of cherries, pomegranate, nutskin, a beautiful base of soil tones, violets, cocoa and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, and very pure on the attack, with lovely soil signature, a sappy core and impressive complexity and grip on the suavely tannic and perfectly balanced finish. 2020-2050+. **93.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale” Blanc- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2012 Clos de la Maréchale Blanc is also a very fine example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a very stylish blend of apple, peach, a touch of *crème patissière*, white soil tones, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and shows off a lovely core of fruit, with bright acids, very good focus and balance and a lovely sense of being light on its feet on the very long and succulent finish. This wine will be wide open for business as soon as it is released, but has the requisite balance to age for a decade or more- if one can keep one's hands off of the bottles! 2014-2025+. **92.**

Domaine Georges Roumier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Christophe Roumier has crafted a stellar lineup of 2012s, but his malos were on the late side this year and in his cold cellars, they had only finished up between four and six weeks prior to my mid-November visit. Consequently, nothing in the cellar had yet been racked and a few of the wines were a bit reduced. As Christophe was planning on racking the entire cellar once the crowds at Hospices time had thinned out a bit, there will be plenty of time for these wines to blossom over the coming winter months, but given how obviously beautiful the 2012 Roumier wines are going to be, it would have been very nice to have caught them when they were singing in barrel! Christophe reported that yields are down about twenty-five percent in 2012 from his ten year average, and the overall domaine yields were twenty-four hectoliters per hectare in this vintage. Additionally, 2013 will be approximately the same, so it is going to be no easy task to find 2012 or 2013 Roumier wines in the pipeline in coming years. The only parcel of Domaine Roumier that had to deal with hail in 2012 was the Corton-Charlemagne, which was hit hard in mid-summer and there were only two barrels of this wine produced in this vintage. The family's parcel of Musigny was down by one-third, which makes it all fit nicely in a single barrel in 2012! The entire Roumier lineup shows the very refined and elegant structural side of the vintage, with that incomparable combination of sappy, pure fruit, striking transparency and very refined, almost velvety tannic structures the calling card for every single wine here in 2012. Given that the malos were so late to finish here, it is probable that each and every wine chez Roumier is even more aromatically expressive than how they showed at the time of my visit, and it would not surprise me to see the scores here all move up a touch next year, when I have a chance to revisit a few of the wines in bottle. By the way, as was the case at several domaines, I revisited quite a few of the Roumier 2011s and can only say that the foolishness I see bandied about concerning the “green meanies” of this vintage are doing a tremendous disservice to Burgundy lovers who believe the BS. Christophe Roumier's 2011s are stunningly beautiful and utterly classic wines, and anyone who forgoes these 2011s in the hopes of adding more 2012s to one's cellar is going to profoundly regret having done so!

2012 Bourgogne- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2012 Roumier Bourgogne rouge is another really pretty example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, a touch of cocoa, gentle notes of gamebird and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, juicy and very well-balanced, with moderate complexity, but impressive depth and grip on the long and quite poised finish. A really pretty wine that will drink very well out of the blocks. 2014-2022. **87.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

I have bought and cellared an awful lot of Christophe Roumier's village Chambolle over the years and I really love this bottling, so it should come as no surprise that the 2012 is another wine that I would be ecstatic to add to my cellar. The bouquet is deep, pure, complex and quite classic in its profile of red and black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, cocoa, lovely soil tones, woodsmoke, a dollop of nutskin and incipient notes of gamebirds. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, suave on the attack and quite sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, refined tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and tangy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **91.**

2012 Morey St. Denis "Clos de la Bussière"- Domaine Georges Roumier

As was the case in 2010, the 2012 Clos de la Bussière is a very, very elegant rendition of this lovely premier cru. The very pure and sappy nose jumps from the glass in a fine blend of black cherries, sweet blackberries, cocoa, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a touch of coffee bean and a gentle topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure, with lovely elegance on the attack, a fine, sappy core, excellent transparency, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and tangy finish. This is excellent. 2022-2050+. **92+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny "Combottes"- Domaine Georges Roumier

The Roumier Combottes is still pretty young vines, with half of the parcel planted in 1982 and half in 1999, but the low yields of the vintage have done a nice job of restraining the youngest of these vines and this wine has really turned out beautifully in this year. The deep, pure and very sappy nose offers a blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, a touch of nutskin, a lovely base of soil, gentle smokiness and fine topnote of violets (of the morning). On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave and silky on the attack, with a sappy core, lovely, elegant soil tones, velvety tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused and very refined finish. Lovely juice. 2019-2045. **92.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny "les Cras"- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2012 les Cras was a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but underneath is really a superb wine in the making. The bouquet is a blend of black cherries, red plums, cocoa, woodsmoke, incipient notes of gamebird, a very complex base of soil and a nice touch of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with superb backend minerality, a rock solid core of red fruit, fine-grained tannins and exceptional focus and balance on the very long, tangy and still quite primary finish. This is going to be a stellar wine! 2022-2060+. **93-94.**

2012 Charmes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

The 2012 Charmes-Chambertin from Christophe Roumier is very black fruity this year, as it offers up a complex and classy nose of black cherries, French roast, pomegranate, incipient notes of grilled meats, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with a nice sense of reserve, great focus and balance, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the pure and still very primary finish. This will be excellent. 2022-2060. **93.**

2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

The 2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin from Christophe is another absolutely stellar example of the vintage, with a gorgeous sense of elegance and great depth and soil signature. The stunning nose wafts from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, vestiges of the meatiness to come, a touch of nutskin, mustard seed, a very complex base of soil and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and elegant on the attack, with a sappy core, great mineral drive, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. This may well be the second coming of the legendary 1991 Roumier Ruchottes! 2023-2060+. **94+**.

2012 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Georges Roumier

I was surprised that Christophe Roumier chose to serve the Bonnes-Mares ahead of the les Amoureuses this year, but perhaps it was because the Bonnes-Mares was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit. Despite this, it was quite clear that this is going to be a legendary 2012, as it wafts from the glass in a deep and primary mélange of black cherries, a touch of blackberry, espresso, dark plums, woodsmoke, gamebirds, complex soil tones and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, complete and full-bodied, with bottomless depth, ripe, seamless tannins, great focus and nascent complexity and a very, very long, poised and primary finish. A legend in the making. 2026-2075+. **96+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Georges Roumier

There are only four barrels this year of this magical elixir, so starting pleading with your Roumier merchant right now! The brilliant, pure and sappy nose delivers an exhilarating blend of black cherries, damsons, cocoa, gamebirds, kaleidoscopic soil tones, violets, a hint of nutskin and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very, very deep and transparent, with a sappy core, supreme elegance, fine-grained tannins and brilliant length and grip on the laser-like finish. A great wine. 2025-2065+. **96+**.

2012 Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2012 Roumier Musigny is a fabulously complex and utterly complete example of this magical *terroir*. The bouquet soars from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, woodsmoke, a brilliantly complex base of soil, fresh thyme, morning flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and brilliantly refined, with a sappy core, great soil signature, suave, ripe tannins and a very, very long, tangy and dancing finish. This is a bit more new oaky than usual, as it was raised in a new barrel, but the depth of fruit and purity of soil here have simply devoured the new wood and this is a great example of this great wine. 2025-2075+. **99**.

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Georges Roumier

Though there are only two barrels of the 2012 Roumier Corton-Charlemagne, the very short yields here have not done anything out of the ordinary (such as super concentration) with this wine and it is an utterly pure, classic rendition of the far Pernand side of the hill of Corton. The deep, complex and classy nose wafts from the glass in a mélange of pear, apple, iodine, white flowers, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and beautifully balanced, with bright acids, lovely focus and grip and a very long, complex and wide open finish. This reminds me very much of the lovely 1992 Corton-Charlemagne *chez* Roumier, which was a stunning drink for the first ten years of its life! 2014-2025+. **93**.



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

François Millet and his team at Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé have made stunning examples of the vintage in 2012, and these are destined to be ranked right up there with the 2008s and the 2010s as the finest wines produced here in many, many years. Monsieur Millet is an avid gardener, and it is always enjoyable to chat with him about the characteristics of a particular vintage, as he has more flower analogies for any given vintage than anyone I know of in Burgundy and his observations are always spot on for the style of the vintage. For the 2012s, he finds that “the floral aspects of the wines are the morning flowers, with a sweetness and delicacy that is not found in the more pungent flowers of the afternoon”, with “roses, violets and peonies in abundance.” These beautiful floral aromatics are coupled to stunningly pure, almost crunchy fruit tones of great purity and perfect ripeness, and the underlying soil signatures in each and every wine in the cellars here this year are exemplary. I arrived at the domaine just as the racking was beginning to take place in the cellars, so that the Chambolle “villages” bottling was just racked the day before my visit, but all the rest of the lineup was tasted out of barrels that had not yet been racked. I noted that the percentage of new oak here has gradually fallen over the years, and the days when these were pretty new oaky wines are now far, far away and the superb terroirs here take front and center in the wines. For example, the Musigny has now been raised in thirty-five percent new oak for several vintages, and this seems like a very good percentage to let the magical soil signature of this, the greatest of Burgundy vineyards, to take center stage. This is a stellar range of 2012s!

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2012 Chambolle *villages* from Domaine de Comte de Vogüé was showing very well for only having been racked yesterday, as it offers up a lovely and complex nose of cherries, pomegranate, peonies, cocoa, a dollop of blood orange, lovely soil tones and just a hint of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with a good core, a seamless structure, moderate tannins and a long, nicely tangy and well-balanced finish. A fine Chambolle *villages*! 2019-2040. **90.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Domaine de Georges de Comte de Vogüé

The 2012 bottling of young vine Musigny was a touch reduced at the time of my visit (though barrels of this wine were already being racked in the adjoining cellar), but underneath this touch of reduction is a very, very pretty and stylishly red fruity wine. The bouquet is ultimately a fine mélange of cherries, strawberries, a bit of orange peel, woodsmoke, fresh herb tones, a beautiful base of soil, gentle notes of new oak and a pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and rock solid at the core, with bright acids, moderate, suave tannins and outstanding backend energy and grip on the focused and very classy finish. This is going to be a very, very good wine. 2020-2050. **92.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2012 Amoureuses was absolutely singing at the time of my visit, soaring from the glass in a beautiful blend of cherries, blood orange, a touch of nutskin, roses, a marvelously complex base of chalky soil tones, mustard seed, cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely soil signature, tangy acids and a very long, vibrant and suavely-tannic finish. The fruit is so pure on the backend that it is almost crunchy in texture. A beautiful wine. 2022-2060. **94.**

2012 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2012 Bonnes-Mares from the Comte de Vogüé is really stunning this year, delivering a very deep, pure and vibrant bouquet of red plums, cherries, cocoa, a marvelously complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of nutskin, gamebirds and a stylish base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with great transparency, substantial, but very fine-grained tannins, impeccable focus and balance and superb length and grip on the seamless and still quite primary finish. I love the very red fruity character of the wine this year, and it shows a lovely sense of reserve out of the blocks that augurs very well for its future and very long-lived development. One of the greatest young vintages of Comte de Vogüé Bonnes-Mares I have ever had the pleasure to taste! 2025-2075+. **95.**

2012 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2012 Musigny Vieilles Vignes from the Comte de Vogüé is also a brilliant wine in the making. The deep, pure and nascently complex nose wafts from the glass in a stunning blend of red and black cherries, raspberries, red plums, cocoa, a stunning base of soil tones, hints of the smokiness to come, pungent (morning) violets and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and perfectly focused, with a sappy core of fruit, glorious transparency, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the very, very long, pure and perfectly focused finish. A great wine. 2025-2075+. **97.**

Vougeot

Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat (Vougeot)

Charles Van Canneyt, the grandson of Alain Hudelot, was in a very good mood at the time of my November visit. One reason may have been that it was his birthday, but as he also observed, “in 2012, we were really comparatively lucky compared to many of our colleagues, as our yields were roughly the same in this vintage as was the case with the 2011s.” He has made simply superb examples of the vintage, and as fine as these wines are in 2012 (and they are indeed absolutely stunning and fabulously elegant young red Burgundies), I have the impression that the wines here are going to continue to improve with each passing vintage and we have not yet seen the high water mark for what Monsieur Van Canneyt will accomplish at this great estate. I was a huge fan of Pierre Navrocki’s wines when he was in charge of the cellar here, and vineyard manager Vincent Meunier did a marvelous job as well keeping the winemaking seat warm after Monsieur Navrocki’s departure and while Charles was finishing his studies in oenology, but it is my distinct impression that things have gotten even more exciting at Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat in the last few years and the future here is as rosy as anywhere in the Côte d’Or. As far as the 2012 vintage is concerned here, the malos were on the late side, with most of the wines not finishing up until September or even early October and nothing had been racked yet at the time of my visit- though this was imminent. A couple of wines, such as the Beaumonts, were quite reduced when I tasted them, but for the most part, the cellar was in fine form and the wines were showing stellar potential. As was the case in a few other cellars that I visited on this trip, Monsieur Van Canneyt noted that the stems were in such perfect condition of ripeness in 2012 that he used a bit more whole cluster fermentation than in any previous vintage, with every wine (except the Bourgogne rouge) seeing about twenty percent of the stems retained for the fermentations this year. The wines are quite red fruity in 2012, with even some of the more typically black fruity terroirs, such as Suchots, showing a remarkable amount of pure red fruit in this vintage. This is a beautifully pure, transparent and elegant set of wines that are absolutely the quintessence of great Burgundy!

2012 Bourgogne- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Bourgogne from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is a very pretty wine in the making, offering up a fine, red fruity nose of raspberries, cherries, cocoa and a nice base of soil. On the palate the wine is medium-full, juicy on the attack and really has quite good stuffing for its level, with just a bit of backend tannin and lovely length and grip. A serious example. 2014-2020. **87+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Chambolle from Monsieur Van Canneyt is excellent, with all of the sappy purity of the vintage coupled nicely to a fine base of soil nuances. The impressive bouquet jumps from the glass in a sappy blend of cherries, red plums, cocoa, chalky soil tones and a topnote of exotic spices. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and succulent on the attack, with an excellent core, fine focus and grip, a bit of suave backend tannin and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. Classic Chambolle. 2018-2040. **90.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Vosne-Romanée AC from Hudelot-Noëllat is another absolutely beautiful, red fruity village wine with no shortage of soil tones or bounce. The bright and pure nose offers up scents of raspberries, strawberries, a touch of duck, cocoa, Vosne spices, stylish soil tones and a deft touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and velvety on the attack,

with a good core, fine-grained tannins and a long, bright and youthful finish. Equally lovely. 2018-2040. **90.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Au Bas de Combe”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

This is a beautifully situated *lieu à dit*, right on the Vosne-Romanée boundary, and the 2012 has turned out beautifully with all of the inherent elegance of the vintage finding a receptive host in this lovely wine. The first class nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of cherries, pomegranate, a touch of nutskin, gamebird, fine soil tones and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a bit more mid-palate stuffing than the above two *villages* bottlings, very refined tannins and excellent length and grip on the pure finish. This is a very classy young bottle of Nuits. 2019-2040+. **90+.**

2012 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The proximity of Petits Vougeots to Chambolle-Musigny has never been more evident in this bottling *chez* Hudelot than in this sappy and elegant 2012. The very sappy and pure nose offers up a gorgeous mélange of cherries, red plums, roses, woodsmoke, cocoa, mustard seed and a very gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nascently complex, with plenty of mid-palate sappiness, outstanding soil inflection, velvety tannins and superb length and grip on the vibrant and very refined finish. Outstanding wine! 2019-2045. **92.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Murgers”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

I love the elegance of top flight Murgers, and this is a quality that is found in spades in the 2012 version from Charles Van Canneyt. The gorgeous nose offers up a deep and very pure mélange of red and black cherries, gamebirds, nutskin, a complex base of soil, coffee and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core, excellent structure, ripe tannins and excellent grip and focus on the very long and still quite primary finish. This is going to be a fine, fine bottle in six to eight years' time. 2020-2050. **92+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Chambolle “Charmes” was a bit more reserved aromatically than the preceding pair of premier crus, but it shows such purity, precision and energy on the palate that it is clearly going to be a stunning wine with a bit of bottle age. The lovely nose offers up a primary mix of cherries, red plums, cocoa, chalky soil tones, gamebirds and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with a sappy core of red fruit, tangy acids, excellent focus and balance and a very long, suavely-tannic finish. Lovely juice. 2020-2045. **92.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Beaumonts was due to be racked the day after my visit and it was plenty ready for it, as the wine was pretty reduced at that time. I have no doubt that this is going to be a lovely wine, as it is very long, pure and well-balanced on the palate, but it was reduced enough that I did not take a precise note on the wine. I would expect it to be at least as good as the fine range of premier crus that preceded it.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

I really love the 2012 Suchots from Domaine Hudelot, as the overtly red fruity character of this wine this year is very rare for this *terroir* and earmarks a very special vintage of the wine. The gorgeous nose offers up scents of cherries, raspberries, a touch of blood orange, Vosne spices, a beautiful base of minerality, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very transparent, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, soil-driven and tangy finish. Superb juice. 2020-2050. **93+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

As good as the range of premier crus in the Hudelot cellars is this year, one moves up a small step when arriving at this stunning Malconsorts, which is the epitome of red fruity elegance, transparency and intensity of flavor without undue weight. The magical bouquet delivers a pure and perfumed blend of red plums, cherries, raspberries, cocoa, duck, very complex minerality, roses, vanillin oak and incipient notes of the Vosne spices to come with evolution. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with stunning refinement and focus, a very sappy core of red fruit, velvety tannins and great length and grip on the tangy and soil-driven finish. Classic Malconsorts! 2020-2050+. **94+**.

2012 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

I have a fair bit of Hudelot-Noëllat Clos Vougeot in my personal cellar, as I rank this as one of the three or four best examples produced in the Clos year in and year out, but none of the lovely wines I have in my cellar is in the same league with this brilliant 2012 version! The bouquet is both deeper and sappier than any of the premier crus, offering up a beautiful blend of red plums, red and black cherries, gamebirds, cocoa, a touch of nutskin, a marvelously complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and flawlessly cut, with a stunning core, great soil signature, suave tannins and magical length and grip on the seamless and youthful finish. A great, great wine. 2022-2060+. **95+**.

2012 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Romanée-St.-Vivant from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is glorious example of both this great *terroir* and this historic vintage. The very pure and very sappy nose soars from the glass in a mélange of red and black raspberries, cherries, roses, fresh nutmeg, orange zest, Vosne spices, a very, very complex base of soil tones, duck and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with a greater sense of reserve (or is that resolve?) than the Clos Vougeot, very elegant tannins, tangy acids and laser-like focus on the perfectly balanced, elegant and endless finish. Glorious juice! 2022-065+. **97**.

2012 Richebourg- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2012 Richebourg was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but underneath is another legend in the making. The bouquet is a blend of cherries, red plums, cocoa, gamebirds, a very mineral signature of soil, woodsmoke, fresh nutmeg and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with stunning depth, fine-grained tannins, superb precision and a very, very long and tangy finish. This is a very elegant and refined vintage of the Hudelot Richebourg and it will be one of the greatest wines ever produced in the long history of this illustrious domaine. 2025-2075. **97**.

Vosne-Romanée

Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair (Vosne-Romanée)

Louis-Michel Liger-Belair had a surprise wine waiting for us when we arrived to taste his 2012s, as we started out with his first white wine! He has purchased a monopole premier cru vineyard in Prémieux called Clos des Grandes Vignes”, which is 2.2 hectares in size, with 1.6 hectares planted with sixty year-old pinot noir vines, .3 hectares with younger pinot vines and .3 of a hectare planted to chardonnay. He observed that it is a very promising terroir, with one meter of a clay-limestone blend of topsoil layered over a very deep vein of pure, hard limestone, and the vineyard should prove to be equally fine for both red and white wines. In the 2012 vintage, he produced enough chardonnay grapes to make three barrels, with one of the barrels new out of the three. It is an exciting new addition to the lineup, and as good as the 2012 Blanc

version is (and it is very good), the rouge is even better! Louis-Michel reported that yields are down across the board here twenty percent from the already short crop of 2011, so this is another domaine where it is not going to be very easy to find many of the top wines in 2012. However, it is also very clear that Monsieur Liger-Belair has produced the very finest wines yet of his career (and we have already seen some serious high water marks in the past!) in 2012 and this is one cellar where one can simply buy anything that comes your way and be totally delighted with the results. I had the extreme good fortune to catch the 2012 Liger-Belair wines at a very good moment to taste them and I probably will never forget the vinous fireworks on display at this magical tasting. There is a purity of terroir here in 2012, coupled to such brilliantly pure and sappy expressions of fruit that I am sure that Henri Mayer is looking down from somewhere with a huge smile on his face! It is pretty easy in the Liger-Belair cellars to get seduced into thinking that the fireworks really get started here with the Petits Monts or Brûlées and that the very top three wines are in a league of their own, but in 2012, the reality is that the simple Vosne AC bottling is truly a brilliant village wine and that each and every wine here in this vintage is a flawless example of its respective appellation. Sure, I would love to have a six pack of La Romanée sitting in my cellar, but I would honestly be just as excited with a dozen bottles of the Vosne-Romanée AC or the Chaumes in 2012, as these are truly stunning examples of their respective terroirs and complete and compelling wines in their own rights! Perhaps it would be even more fun to have the Chaumes or Vosne AC in the cellar, as it would be more fun down the road to be pulling out bottles of magical 2012 Chaumes and serving those blind to very good wine-drinking friends, as I guarantee that no one is going to guess Chaumes for the wine (they may actually guess La Romanée or Reignots)! This is just, flat out, an amazing collection of wines in 2012 and tasting here was one of the highlights of my trip- and given how magical the 2012 vintage is in Burgundy, there were an awful lot of amazing cellars to taste through this year. But, at the end of the day, Louis-Michel may well have crafted the single finest lineup from top to bottom that I sampled. Chapeau!

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Grandes Vignes” Blanc- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

For a first-time white wine, I was very, very impressed with the 2012 Clos des Grandes Vignes Blanc and suspect that this wine is only going to get better as Louis-Michel gets more experience working with this parcel. The bouquet is deep, pure and quite lovely in its mélange of pear, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, a touch of honeycomb, gentle notes of orange peel and a very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and shows lovely, chalky soil signature, with a fine core, good acids and very nice length and grip on the wide open and complex finish. Lovely juice. 2014-2025+. **90.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “aux Lavières”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Nuits St. Georges “aux Lavières” from Liger-Belair is an absolutely beautiful village wine and in retrospect, this was a clear indication of just how high the summits were going to be in the cellars here in this vintage! The superb bouquet wafts from the glass in an exuberant blend of red and black cherries, nutskin, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones and a deft touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with very fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and complexity and a very long, tangy finish. This is a gorgeous village wine. 2019-2040. **90.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Vosne AC from Domaine Liger-Belair is another absolutely stellar, sappy and soil-driven village wine that is very, very long on silken pleasure and perfume. The really

striking nose jumps from the glass in a mix of raspberries, cherries, Vosne spice tones, quail, lovely minerality and a nice base of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and very intensely flavored, with a sappy core of red fruit, excellent minerality, modest, velvety tannins and a very long, focused and tangy finish. This wine is going to age beautifully, as it is extremely well-balanced, but it is going to be so seductive out of the blocks that I would fully expect that ninety percent of the production will have been drunk up with great enjoyment before the wine has seen three years in bottle! High class AC. 2017-2035. **90.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 la Colombière is also a beautiful village wine in the making, with a bit more mid-palate stuffing than the straight Vosne AC and a bit better structure for the long haul. The gorgeous and very sappy nose offers up scents of red plums, raspberries, exotic spice tones, a beautiful base of soil, just a touch of mustard seed and a fine framing of cedary new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and tangy, with a beautiful core of sappy fruit, excellent soil signature, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. 2018-2040+. **91.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Clos du Château”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Clos du Château was the only wine that was already bottled at Domaine Liger-Belair, as it had been bottled a month and a half prior to my visit in mid-November. The wine was showing beautifully and very flamboyantly, jumping from the glass in a blaze of red plums, raspberries, a touch of nutskin, duck, cardamom, floral tones (peonies?) and a nice base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, pure and very velvety, with excellent mid-palate depth, suave tannins and outstanding focus and balance on the long, classy and nascently complex finish. Lovely juice. 2018-2040+. **91+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

I love what both Louis-Michel Liger-Belair and Jean-Nicolas Méo are doing of late with their examples of les Chaumes, as both are using a bit of whole cluster fermentation to add precision and structural bounce to what can sometimes be a rather too voluptuous premier cru. The domaine’s parcel of les Chaumes is planted with sixty-six year-old vines right at the top of the slope and immediately below La Tâche. In 2012, Louis-Michel used fifteen percent whole clusters here and the wine has turned out stunningly beautiful, as it offers up a deep and complex nose of black raspberries, plums, cinnamon stick, duck, a superb base of soil tones, Vosne spices and a stylish touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and supremely elegant this year, with superb complexity, a fine, sappy core, tangy acids, outstanding transparency, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the tangy and very precise finish. A superb bottle of les Chaumes and a wine to search out. 2020-2050. **93.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Suchots from Louis-Michel Liger-Belair is utterly classic in both aromatic and flavor profile, offering up a stunning nose of black raspberries, dark berries, espresso, woodsmoke, venison, dark soil tones, Vosne spices and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and very, very soil-driven, with great intensity of flavor, a sappy core, excellent focus, suave tannins and seamless balance on the very, very long and tangy finish. A quintessential bottle of Suchots. 2020-2050+. **93+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brûlées”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis-Michel Liger-Belair’s 2012 Brûlées is another stunning bottle of premier cru, soaring from the glass in a flamboyant and utterly refined mélange of red and black raspberries, dark plums, woodsmoke, incipient notes of venison, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the

wine is pure, full-bodied and gorgeously transparent, with a sappy, seductive core of fruit, great focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, tangy and complex finish. Gorgeously juice. 2020-2050. **94.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Grandes Vignes”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The positioning of the Clos des Grandes Vignes in this lineup of stunning 2012s shows Louis-Michel’s expectations for this wine in the future, and I must say that the inaugural vintage is pretty stunning juice! The wine was fermented with ten percent whole clusters in this vintage and soars from the glass in an utterly superb aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, gamebirds, nutskin, a superb base of complex soil tones, espresso, a touch of fresh nutmeg and a fine base of spicy new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant, with a sappy core, bright acids, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy, young finish. A very high class new addition to the Liger-Belair portfolio! 2019-2045. **92+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Liger-Belair Petits Monts is brilliant wine. The stunning nose delivers a complex and very pure blend of dark berries, black raspberries, espresso, dark soil tones, duck, a touch of cinnamon, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and utterly refined, with stunning transparency, a sappy core of black fruit, velvety tannins and superb length and grip on the tangy and perfectly focused finish. I love this *terroir* and the 2012 version from Louis-Michel Liger-Belair ranks right up there with the very greatest examples of Petits Monts I have ever had the pleasure to taste! 2020-2060. **95.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 aux Cras from Domaine Liger-Belair is another stellar wine and really reminds me of the young vintages of Henri Mayer’s Murgers that I used to taste back in the day! The superb bouquet is a mélange of black cherries, dark plums, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, incipient notes of venison, a touch of nutskin, a gorgeous base of soil and a stylish framing of spicy wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and flamboyant at the core, with stunning depth of fruit, great soil signature, very suave tannins and a long, complex and perfectly balanced, tangy finish. If you cannot get any Vosne premier crus this year from Liger-Belair, do not, I repeat, do not turn up your nose at the Nuits St. Georges ‘aux Cras’, as this is a brilliant wine in the making! 2020-2060. **94.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “aux Reignots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

At this point in the tasting, I was starting to hit sensory overload, as the fireworks had begun early and showed absolutely no signs of letting up with each subsequent wine. The 2012 Reignots is, not surprisingly, and utterly stunning young wine, soaring from the glass in an aromatic constellation of black plums, black raspberries, dark soil tones, duck, a gorgeously complex base of dark soil tones, fresh nutmeg, Vosne spices and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and bottomless, with a flamboyant core of sappy black fruit, magical minerality, very velvety tannins and laser-like focus on the very, very long, perfectly balanced and quite tangy finish. Brilliant juice. 2020-2060+. **96.**

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2012 Echézeaux from Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair is another stunning wine in the making, offering up a pure, sappy and magically complex nose of black raspberries, black cherries, venison, dark plums, a gorgeous base of soil, dark chocolate, a bit of bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very sappy at the core, with stunning focus and intensity, very suave tannins, bright acids and impeccable balance and precision on the

very, very long, nascently complex finish. I hate to keep using the comparison to Henri Jay, but this is really what his Echézeaux used to taste like when it was a young wine! 2022-2065+. **96.**

2012 La Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Back in November of 2011, when I was first tasting the magical 2010 La Romanée, I really never envisioned that I could taste a more perfect example of this magical *terroir*. Well, the 2012 is at least as good as that great 2010, and it will be very interesting, ten or twenty years down the road, to see which of these two legendary efforts will eventually deliver the greatest level of pleasure and profundity. The 2012 La Romanée is a wine of effortless and utterly unforgettable beauty, soaring from the glass in an otherworldly blend of black plums, black raspberries, fresh nutmeg, kaleidoscopic soil tones, duck, incipient Vosne spices, dark chocolate and a very discreet base of new oak. I know that this wine was raised in one hundred percent new oak, but the depth of sappy fruit and the great signature of soil here have simply combined to devour the wood this year! On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, breathtakingly pure and utterly seamless, with a sappy core of gorgeous fruit, stunning transparency, very suave, silken tannins and brilliant backend energy that gives this supremely elegant wine a sense of vibrancy and purity that simply takes one's breath away! I simply cannot imagine a more profoundly refined and seamless example of this legendary vintage. 2025-2100. **100.**

Domaine Méo-Camuzet (Vosne-Romanée)

Jean-Nicolas Méo has produced a lovely range of 2012s, but as the entire cellar had either been racked just prior to or right after the harvest of 2013, not every wine in the lineup that we tasted was in a good mood about being disturbed. This was very typical in a great many cellars that I visited on this trip, as the late harvest of 2013 saw a great many wines that had been racked fairly recently prior to my arrival in Burgundy, or conversely, where the wines were a bit reduced and very much ready for a racking. At Domaine Méo-Camuzet, with everything now racked, it was only a matter of how long a given wine had received in terms of recovery time from the racking that determined how well it was showing, but there is little doubt that this is a very strong set of wines chez Méo. Given the very short yields here in 2012, I did not ask to try the entire range this year, as it seemed more appropriate to be content with a nice selection from the portfolio and not put further constraints on this very short crop. Jean-Nicolas has continued to use a bit more whole cluster fermentation for various cuvées in 2012, and the percentage of new wood has decreased a bit in this vintage for some of the bottlings. For example, the fine lineup of Nuits St. Georges premier crus here was raised in anywhere from fifty-five to sixty percent new wood in 2012, which is down significantly from what they would have seen a decade ago. Interestingly, the two Cortons that I tasted on this visit (the la Vigne au Saint and the Perrières) probably showed the most suave tannins of any Côte de Beaune reds that I tasted during my entire trip in November.

2012 Bourgogne Blanc “Clos St. Philibert”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Clos St. Philibert is a very pretty bottle of Bourgogne blanc that offers up lovely soil signature this year and a very succulent personality. The very stylish nose wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, a touch of tangerine, a fine base of chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a bit of high end smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely concentrated, with crisp acids, a fine core and lovely length and grip. A very serious example of Bourgogne. 2014-2020+. **88.**

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas Méo now makes one of my very favorite examples of Corton-Charlemagne and the 2012 version is stunning. He purchases grapes from two different *climats* in the Aloxe section of the hill of Corton, with one facing due south (whose name I did not catch) and the other being les Languettes, which lies right next door to Pougets and above Perrières on the slope right near the Pernand boundary. The wine is truly stellar this year, delivering a deep and classic bouquet of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of *crème patissière*, gentle notes of iodine, fresh nutmeg and a stylish base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and complex, with a superb core of fruit, bright acids, outstanding focus and grip and a very long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. This will drink splendidly right from the outset, but I would be inclined to at least give it a few years of bottle age to allow its secondary layers of complexity to emerge. Great juice. 2016-2035. **94+**.



Jean-Nicolas Méo before a fairly recent Paulée event in Beaune.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Bourgogne was showing very well at the time of my visit (despite its recent racking), and will be a lovely drink with a year or two in the cellar. The bouquet is bright and stylish, offering up scents of cherries, plums, a touch of cocoa, woodsmoke and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and gently chewy, with a nice core of fruit, just a touch of tannin and very good length and grip for its level. 2015-2030. **87+**.

2012 Fixin- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Fixin from Domaine Méo-Camuzet has really captured the elegance of the vintage, as it is quite red fruity and transparent this year. The bouquet is a fine blend of cherries, a touch of red plum, dark minerality, a bit of nutskin and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and quite soil-driven, with good mid-palate depth, gentle tannins and a long, succulent and tangy finish. This is really a lovely bottle of Fixin AC. 2014-2030+. **88.**

2012 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Morey *villages* is another really pretty and sappy example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a mélange of red and black cherries, a touch of fresh herbs, coffee, woodsmoke, gamebirds and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and nicely transparent, with a good core, lovely balance, fine focus and very good length and grip on the suavely tannic finish. Really a lovely bottle in the making. 2017-2035. **89+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Méo-Camuzet Vosne AC hails primarily from vines in the *lieu à dit* of les Barreaux, which is one of the cooler sites in Vosne-Romanée. The 2012 version has turned out splendidly, offering up a deep and perfumed bouquet of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, a fine base of minerally soil tones, a touch of new oak and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is a bit more reserved than the Morey AC, with more mid-palate depth and a bit more structure in evidence. It is full-bodied and quite pure on the attack, with a tightly-knit personality, a fine core and a long, tangy and ripely-tannic finish. I imagine this wine will show a bit more early generosity as it bounces back more fully from the racking, and it will be a very, very lovely village wine with a few years in the cellar. 2018-2040. **90+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Méo-Camuzet les Cras has really turned out well this year, offering up truly stunning transparency to this great *terroir*. The superb nose jumps from the glass in a mix of red plums, sappy cherries, cocoa, a wonderfully complex base of soil, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke and a nice framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very soil-driven, with a sappy core of red fruit, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very long and beautifully balanced and vibrant finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Chambolle in the making. 2020-2050. **92+.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

It is interesting that both Jean-Nicolas Méo and Louis-Michel Liger-Belair have both begun at the same time to incorporate a bit more whole cluster fermentation into the cellar regime for their les Chaumes, and both bottlings have responded beautifully to this change and really moved up dramatically to my palate in both complexity and structural integrity as a result. The 2012 Chaumes will be lovely, as it offers up a fine and very red fruity aromatic blend of cherries, raspberries, red plums, cocoa, a refined base of soil, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and tangy, with lovely intensity of flavor, a very good core, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and transparent finish. A lovely wine. 2020-2050. **92.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Argillières”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Argillières” from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is outstanding in this vintage, offering up a superb bouquet of sappy black cherries, pomegranate, dark soil tones, smoke, gamebirds, cocoa, nutskins and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very transparent, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely focus and grip and excellent length on the ripely-tannic and very soil-driven finish. This is a beautiful synthesis of the elegance of

the vintage and the sturdy nature of this vineyard, and it will be an outstanding wine in the fullness of time. 2022-2050+. **92+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “aux Murgers”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Murgers is quite a bit more black fruity in personality than the lovely les Argillières, but it too shows off excellent transparency and sappiness to its fruit component. The excellent bouquet jumps from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, dark plums, cocoa, a nice touch of nutskin, a very good base of dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a superb core, suave, ripe tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. Superb juice, but give it time in the cellar to blossom. 2020-2050+. **92+**.

2012 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The inherent elegance of the 2012 vintage has found a perfect dance partner in this superb Clos Vougeot from Domaine Méo-Camuzet, and this is probably my favorite Clos Vougeot here since the stellar 1993 version. The really gorgeous bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful blend of red and black cherries, red plums, a beautifully complex base of soil, cocoa, violets, vanillin oak and a touch of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very transparent, with fine-grained tannins, outstanding focus and balance and a very long, complex and classic finish. A beautiful wine in the making. 2022-2060. **93+**.

2012 Corton “Perrières”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Corton “Perrières” from Jean-Nicolas Méo is absolutely outstanding this year. The wine offers up a deep and superb bouquet of black cherries, blood orange, gamebirds, stony minerality, woodsmoke, coffee, a lovely dollop of Corton spice tones and a judicious framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and extremely elegant for a young Corton, with superb minerality, a very sappy core of fruit, excellent focus and grip and a very long, suavely-tannic finish. This is a dynamite Corton in the making! 2024-2060. **94+**.

2012 Corton “la Vigne au Saint”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

There is never much La Vigne au Saint in the Méo cellars, as even in a normal year, there is never more than two barrels of this wine, but in 2012 there is only a single barrel. This is too bad, as this is a superb young Corton as well, offering up a deep and very classy aromatic mix of black cherries, pomegranate, coffee bean, nutskin, a superb base of soil, woodsmoke and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with fine structure, a sappy core of black fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and outstanding length and grip on the very well-balanced and youthful finish. Fine juice in the making- in a more black fruity vein than the Perrières, but equally outstanding. 2024-2060+. **94+**.

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Echézeaux was one of the crankier wines in the cellar at the time of my visit (which I assume is reflective of having been more recently racked) and was showing its new wood component a bit more than most of the other wines in the cellar. I am sure this is only a passing phase in the wine’s normal evolution, and underneath the new oak is a really lovely nose of dark berries, black cherries, gamebirds, espresso, dark soil tones, a bit of bonfire and the aforementioned, spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and elegant on the attack, with a fine core of black fruit, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and quite mineral finish. I am absolutely certain that this will be outstanding. 2022-2060+. **94**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Brulées”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Brulées” from Domaine Méo-Camuzet will be excellent, but it too was showing a bit reserved at the time of my visit and will want to see some extended cellaring before it really blossoms. The bouquet is a lovely and still quite primary blend of black plums, dark berries, woodsmoke, venison, dark chocolate, a touch of espresso and a fair bit of spicy new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core of black fruit, ripe, firm tannins and a very long, nascently complex and quite soil-driven finish. This is probably quite a bit more velvety than it is showing today (again, because of the recent racking), but it is a properly structured wine that is going to be at its best after a decade in the cellar. 2022-2060. **94+**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Cros Parantoux”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2012 Cros Parantoux was also showing a bit shy at the time of my visit from its recent racking, but all of the constituent components are in place here for a magical wine. The deep and nascently complex nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black raspberries, black cherries, plums, gamebirds, a very complex base of minerality, woodsmoke, cocoa and plenty of spicy new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very soil-driven, with a tightly-knit personality, a sappy core, ripe tannins and outstanding length and grip on the youthful and very promising finish. 2023-2060. **95+**.

2012 Richebourg- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

As was the case with all of the top cuvées *chez* Méo, the 2012 Richebourg was a bit reserved at the time of my visit from its racking not to long before my visit. Nevertheless, the wine is clearly going to be stellar, as it offers up a very refined bouquet of black cherries, plums, cocoa, a beautifully complex base of soil, woodsmoke, duck and vanillin oak. ON the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and transparent, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, outstanding focus and balance and lovely grip on the very long, elegant and intensely flavored finish. This is going to be a great wine. 2025-2075. **96+**.

Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg (Vosne-Romanée)

This is of course, hardly a “news flash”, but the Mugneret sisters have made some of the most beautiful wines of the vintage in 2012. I cannot remember the last vintage when this was not the case, but the 2012s are going to rank right up there with the greatest wines ever made at this fine old estate. Marie-Andrée and Marie-Christine Mugneret reported that their yields were down by forty-five percent in 2012 from a “normal” vintage crop size, and though there was no hail damage in their vineyard parcels, some of the oldest vines really suffered during the adverse flowering conditions, so yields are not consistently down and vary a bit from vineyard to vineyard. For example, the Mugnerets have two parcels of vines in Echézeaux, with their oldest vines in the lieu à dit of Rouge du Bas really suffering in 2012, so that their yields were down in this vintage to fifteen hectoliters per hectare and they only produced one barrel from these vines (out of a normal crop load of four and a half barrels worth of fruit). 2012 is also the first vintage that the section of Ruchottes-Chambertin that had to be replanted a decade ago because of disease in the vines has been returned to the grand cru cuvée (it is hard to believe how fast ten years can fly by!), so that the low yields of the vintage will be felt a little less sharply here, as the parcel is now supporting only the Ruchottes cuvée and not a split of Ruchottes and Gevrey “Premier Cru”. I am going to miss the “Ruchottes Junior” in the cellars though, as I became very attached to that wine over the course of its decade of transformation. Of course, the question will immediately be “how has the incorporation of these ten year-old vines into the

cuvée affected the style and quality of the grand cru?” Perhaps there is just a touch less mid-palate concentration here than was the case when it was only produced from the remaining, very old vines in the vineyard, but, I am not really sure of this, as it may well just be the mind playing tricks because I already knew that the younger vines were going to be incorporated into the grand vin this year. Whether or not this is the case, the younger vines bring a sense of energy to the wine that is quite palpable, and as the note below will attest, I really like the combination of the two parcels of differing ages of vines. And, of course, the style of the 2012 vintage has really added depth and concentration to younger vines across the entire Côte d’Or, and there is nothing not to love about the stunning 2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin chez Mugneret! The style of the Mugneret-Gibourg 2012s is beautifully pure, refined and sappy fruit tones, coupled to crystal clear reflections of their underlying soil and velvety, suave tannic structures that promise long and gorgeous evolution in the bottle.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugnerets always make a beautiful example of Bourgogne, and the 2012 is no exception. The really lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, cocoa, a nice base of soil and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is medium-full, bright and very pure, with a good core, impressive transparency, modest, suave tannins and lovely length and grip. Fine juice that will age very well (I just finished my last bottle of the 1998 Bourgogne a couple of months ago, so do not underestimate this wine’s capacity to evolve in the cellar). 2018-2035. **88+**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2012 Vosne-Romanée AC is a lovely example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a bright and perfumed aromatic mix of sappy black cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, complex soil tones, a touch of woodsmoke and a very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely transparency, moderate, well-integrated tannins and a very long, tangy and quite classy finish. A beautiful village wine. 2020-2045. **90+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

There is never much of this lovely, old vine bottling from the superb *lieu à dit* of Au Bas de Combe (which lies on the Vosne border right below the superb premier cru of Boudots), but in 2012 there will only be a single barrel of this fine wine. It is a pity, as it is really lovely this year, offering up a deep and classy bouquet of plums, sappy black cherries, gamebirds, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep and pure, with its full-bodied format exuding the elegance of the vintage. The core is plush, the tannins suave and the wine shows excellent focus and balance on the long and tangy finish. High class juice. 2022-2045+. **91**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

Often I give a slight edge to the inherently more elegant Chaignots bottling *chez* Mugneret, but in the supremely elegant 2012 vintage, the Vignes Rondes has really turned out stunningly well and this is quite clearly the finest young example of this cuvée that I have had the pleasure to taste in the cellars here. The bouquet is pure and very refined, wafting from the glass in a lovely blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, woodsmoke, coffee, gamebirds, dark soil tones, nutskins and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a vibrant personality, a great core, fine-grained tannins and

outstanding focus and grip on the very long, transparent and energetic finish. A beautiful wine in the making. 2022-2055. **93.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2012 Mugneret Chaignots is a stellar example of the vintage as well, offering up a very classy nose of black cherries, cassis, espresso, nutskins, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke, squab and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a sappy core of fruit, outstanding soil signature, velvety tannins and great length and grip on the poised, pure and youthful finish. Lovely juice. 2021-2055. **93.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Feusselottes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2012 Feusselottes is another really stellar example of the vintage, as it offers up a beautiful and nicely reserved bouquet of black cherries, red plums, a touch of cocoa, a complex base of soil, violets, a nice touch of the gamebird to come and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant, with a sappy core of fruit, superb transparency, excellent focus and grip and marvelous backend energy on the suavely-tannic and very long finish. A beautiful bottle of Feusselottes. 2022-2055. **93+.**

2012 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

There are only four barrels total of Echézeaux this year in the Mugnerets’ cellar, but this is a wine that is going to be worth a special search to try and locate a few bottles, as it is the most beautiful example of this cru I have ever tasted here. The deep, very complex and stunningly pure nose soars from the glass in a mix of cassis, black cherries, plums, exotic spices, duck, a stunning base of soil, a touch of graphite, woodsmoke, cocoa and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid to the core, with great delineation and soil signature, stunning balance, fine-grained tannins and a very long, youthful and vibrant finish. Stunning juice. 2025-2075. **96+.**

2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2012 Ruchottes-Chambertin from Mugneret-Gibourg is another brilliant wine, delivering a pure and complex aromatic constellation of dark berries, blackberries, venison, black minerality, coffee bean, woodsmoke and a nice framing of spicy new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, stunning transparency, very suave tannins and tremendous backend energy and grip on the very long and utterly classic finish. A great wine. 2025-2075. **95+.**

2012 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2012 Mugneret-Gibourg Clos Vougeot is a beautiful and utterly seamless wine. The stunning nose is a mix of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, gamebirds, a magically complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, fresh thyme, crushed violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and gorgeously refined, with a sappy core, great soil signature, very elegant tannins and great length and grip on the nascently complex and dancing finish. Sheer brilliance. 2025-2075. **98.**

Nuits St. Georges

Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils (Nuits St. Georges)

Bertrand Chevillon has made splendid examples of the 2012 vintage, and this was one cellar where it was very easy to taste through the lineup, as Monsieur Chevillon had racked a fair bit earlier than many of his neighbors and I caught these wines in a superb moment for tasting. The village wine was racked in May of 2013, and the entire range of premier crus was racked in July, so that everything was showing well in November. These are classic 2012s, with

great succulent and sappy fruit tones of impressive purity coupled to strikingly classic expressions of their respective underlying terroirs. The only deviation I found in the entire cellar from customary was with the stunning 2012 Pruliers, which was remarkably red fruity and elegant out of the blocks, as this wine is customarily a very black fruity wine in its youth and also rather tempestuous out of the blocks and only reveals its inherent elegance with many years of bottle age. But, not this year, as the wine is so polite and classy in its youth that it underscores just how elegant all of these wines are going to be at maturity.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2012 old vine Nuits AC was really showing outstanding potential at the time of my visit, offering up a lovely, complex and very red fruity nose of cherries, strawberries, nutskins, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke, a nice dollop of cocoa and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant, with a sappy core of red fruit, lovely soil drive and excellent length and grip on the moderately tannic finish. A very high class villages! 2018-2035+. **90.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The Chaignots bottling chez Chevillon is always so appealing out of the blocks that I find that I generally have none left in my cellar five years out from any given vintage, though I buy the with great regularity. The 2012 is certainly going to be difficult to keep one’s hands off of once it arrives in the cellar, as it is a beautiful wine that promises to offer up (yet again) very fine drinking in its youth. The superb nose wafts from the glass in a sappy blend of red plums, cherries, cocoa, nutskin, a complex base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy, with excellent mid-palate depth, lovely transparency, good acids and excellent focus and grip on the long, suavely-tannic finish. This is a beautiful bottle in the making and an absolutely classic vintage for the Chevillon Chaignots. 2020-2045+. **92+.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Bousselots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2012 Domaine Chevillon Bousselots is also outstanding and truly striking this year in its stunning synthesis of pure, velvety fruit and great soil transparency. The excellent bouquet offers up a blend of red and black cherries, gamebirds, nutskin, woodsmoke, cocoa, great mineral soil tones and a fine base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise, with a sappy core, great focus and grip and a very, very long, soil-driven and ripely tannic finish. A beautiful and very elegant rendition of Bousselots that is almost as irresistible as the Chaignots out of the blocks this year! 2020-2045+. **92+.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Perrières, with its superb location up above Poirêts and Cailles on the slope, is never short of great stony personality, and I find that this *terroir* really succeeds to its highest expression in vintages such as 2012, when this great base of soil is coupled with vividly beautiful, sappy fruit tones. This is exactly what this superb 2012 offers in spades, as it soars from the glass in a sappy mélange of red and black cherries, cocoa, stony minerality, nutskin, woodsmoke, a nice touch of fresh herbs and a judicious framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost flamboyantly sappy at the core, but with striking purity and structural integrity as well, a great signature of stony soil, ripe tannins and superb length and grip on the more reserved, but no less pure and dramatic finish. This will need more time than the Bousselots or Chaignots to really blossom, but it is going to be a real “head-turner” when it reaches maturity. A great wine. 2022-2050. **93+.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Roncières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2012 Roncières *chez* Chevillon is another outstanding and utterly complete young bottle of Nuits St. Georges. The exceptional nose delivers a vibrant constellation of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, a beautiful base of minerally soil tones, quail, a touch of fresh thyme and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and simply rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and balance, suave, ripe tannins and stunning length and grip on the primary and very poised finish. Another stellar wine. 2022-2050. **93+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Pruliers”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Given how inherently elegant the 2012 vintage is across the board, I knew I should be expecting something special from the Chevillons’ Pruliers, but it was still a very pleasant surprise to see just how red fruity and refined this wine is out of the blocks. The gorgeous and suave nose offers up a fine blend of cherries, pomegranate, great minerality, nutskin, woodsmoke, cocoa, gamebirds and a whisper of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very much defined by its minerality today, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and grip on the very, very long and still quite primary finish. This is an extra special vintage for the Pruliers. 2025-2065. **94.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

I am never surprised by how beautiful the potential is of this wine when tasting the new vintage in the Chevillons family’s cellars, and the 2012 is going to be one of those wines that fans of this estate are just going to have to find some way to purchase- no matter what barriers are constructed in front of them! This brilliant wine is very deep and nicely reserved on the nose, offering up a bottomless blend of red and black cherries, red plums, nutskin, a stunningly complex base of soil, gamebirds, woodsmoke, fresh herbs and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still very primary, with a great core of fruit, firm, suave tannins, tangy acids and a very, very long, primary and gorgeous finish of enormous potential. Simply a brilliant wine in the making! 2025-2065. **95.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2012 Les St. Georges is an utterly complete and compelling example of this great *terroir*, and if I were amongst the *vignerons* lobbying for the promotion of this vineyard to grand cru status, I might just trot out bottles of this wine and the 2010 version from the Chevillons to show just how magical this vineyard can be. Whether the 2012 will match (or surpass) the 2010 version here is a question that only time will tell in the sweetness of time, but this is certainly going to rank right up there with the greatest wines Bertrand Chevillon has ever fashioned during his long and illustrious career. The brilliant nose delivers a complex blend of cherries, strawberries, red plums, woodsmoke, a glorious base of soil, incipient notes of venison, nutskin and a gentle base of vanillin oak. Again, I am struck by just how beautifully red fruity the Les St. Georges is here this year, as this too is usually a very black fruity wine out of the blocks. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very transparent and multi-dimensional, with a fine, sappy core of fruit, stunning transparency, fine-grained tannins and a very long, pure and still quite primary finish. Pure magic. 2025-2075. **97.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2012 Chevillon Vaucrains is again a brilliant wine in the making. The stunningly pure and deep bouquet offers up scents of red and black cherries, red plums, cocoa, venison, a very, very pure base of complex soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and absolutely rock solid at the core, with plenty of firm, well-integrated tannins, and stunning focus and grip on the very, very long, utterly soil-driven finish. I love the

blend of sappy fruit elements defining the nose and the very classically structured, pure and seamless palate impression- it is a very promising combination that will deliver a totally stunning wine with sufficient bottle age. Great juice. 2025-2075. 96+.



Domaine Henri Gouges (Nuits St. Georges)

I had my tastings at Domaines Chevillon and Gouges back to back this year (with a generous half hour in between to run out and get a couple of big duck breasts to cook for dinner on the coming evenings- a very pleasurable shopping excursion with the memory of 2012 Chevillon Vaucrains still dancing away on my palate and the promise of my visit to Domaine Gouges just around the corner!) and it was as fine a morning in Nuits St. Georges as I could ever hope to imagine. Grégory Gouges has produced another brilliant range of wines in 2012, and though the cellar here was a bit behind in its development from that up the road at Domaine Chevillon, the quality here was every bit as superb and there is enormous potential waiting in the entire range of 2012 Domaine Gouges wines. Grégory Gouges began harvesting on September 25th of 2012 and brought in the grapes in superb condition, though as was the case at so many estates in this vintage, yields were down precipitously. The cellar actually looked a wee bit forlorn with so few barrels in it this year (not an infrequent occurrence in 2012), but part of this can be laid at the feet of the new section of cellar that has been set up for barrel storage and elevage, and which formerly had housed unsold bottles of more recent vintages. As Grégory noted, in the past, if someone were to order a case of 2008 Clos des Porrets for instance,

someone (normally meaning him) would have to run down with a couple of baskets and fetch up the dozen bottles to the ground floor to label and package up the wines. Now, the younger vintages are stored in a new bottle cellar on the ground floor, and this has opened up more room for barrels for the elevage, and the former young vintage bottle room is now the home for the barrels of Vaucrains and Les St. Georges. The cellar had only been racked once, after the malos were completed (anywhere from February to April of 2013), and were not going to be racked again until the assemblage was made in preparation for bottling in the spring, unless a wine specifically asked for an additional racking by becoming reduced. As is customary here in November, a few of the wines were slightly reduced, but Monsieur Gouges feels that this is just fine for their long-term development, and he observed that “at this time of the year, I really do not mind if the wines are slightly reduced, as I think this a good thing if one is making wines that are going to last a long time.” And, there is no doubt that these brilliant 2012s here are destined to last for a very long time and be ranked up there at the very pinnacle of the greatest recent vintages in the history of this iconic estate. I did not taste the Bourgogne rouge nor the Nuits. St. Georges Blanc bottlings on this visit. As is the case at Domaine Cheillon, the range of Gouges wines in 2012 is very much red fruity this year, with stunning purity and soil signature and it is a glorious range of wines.

2012 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2012 Nuits *villages* was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but its overall potential was very easy to see. This wine is going to be lovely in only four or five years’ time, as it offers up a really superb bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, nutskins, gamebirds and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a fine, sappy core of fruit, moderate, well-measured tannins, good acids and outstanding length and grip on the focused finish. High class juice. 2018-2040. **90.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Chaignots”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2012 Chaignots from Domaine Gouges is also an excellent wine in the making, as it wafts from the glass in a complex aromatic blend of red and black cherries, gamebirds, a touch of nutskin, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and transparent, with a fine core, excellent focus and grip, suave tannins and a very long, tangy finish. This is going to be excellent. 2019-2040. **92.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Chaînes de Carteaux”- Domaine Henri Gouges

Chaînes de Carteaux is one of the smallest premier crus in all of Nuits St. Georges, but one cannot really argue with its placement, as it is sandwiched at the top of the hill between the border of Prémieux to the south and Vaucrains to the north, with Les St. Georges lying directly below it on the slope. Not bad neighbors! The 2012 Chaînes de Carteaux is going to be a superb bottle of Nuits, as the nose jumps from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, cocoa, gamebirds, a bit of nutskin, a very refined base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with great soil drive on the backend, moderate, suave tannins, sound acids and outstanding focus and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. A really lovely bottle of wine in the making. 2021-2045+. **92.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Porrets”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Clos des Porrets *chez* Gouges is one of the great bottlings in the village and the 2012 version is absolutely stunning! The great nose soars from the glass in a sappy mélange of black cherries, pomegranate, cocoa, a superbly complex base of soil tones, fresh herbs, just a hint of oak and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very

sappy at the core, with the copious fruit tones absolutely enveloped by minerality. The finish is perfectly focused and balanced, with fine-grained tannins, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the very energetic finish. This is a stunning wine in the making. 2022-2075. **94+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Henri Gouges

As is the case with the Pruliers 2012 at Domaine Chevillon, the Gouges version of this superb premier cru is also quite red fruity this year and offers up an uncharacteristic degree of early refinement that augurs exceedingly well for its future development. The superb bouquet is a mix of red and black cherries, pomegranate, woodsmoke, lovely soil tones, nutskin, gamebirds, just a hint of oak and wonderfully smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very transparent, with great purity in the dense core of fruit, great backend mineral drive and superb length and grip on the ripely tannic, properly structured and chewy finish. Great juice in the making, the 2012 Pruliers *chez* Gouges may not quite catch the great Clos des Porrets in terms of elegance- but, with a couple of decades of bottle age, it just might equal that superb wine! 2025-2075. **94**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Gouges family’s 2012 Vaucrains is a simply stunning wine in the making and seems likely to one day be ranked amongst the greatest wines to ever emerge from these cellars. The brilliant nose soars from the glass in a sappy blend of red and black cherries, red plums, cocoa, a gorgeously complex base of minerality, nutskin, woodsmoke and violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, transparent and offers up simply stunning mid-palate depth, with great sappiness to the fruit component, superb soil signature, firm, fine-grained tannins and outstanding focus and balance on the very, very long and seamless finish. A great, great wine in the making. 2025-2075. **96**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2012 Les St. Georges *chez* Gouges is another absolutely brilliant example of the vintage. The glorious nose wafts from the glass in a complex and primary constellation of red and black cherries, a nice touch of sweet, dark berry, coffee bean, a very complex and classy base of soil, woodsmoke and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great, native sappiness, stunning soil inflection, ripe, chewy tannins and great grip and mineral drive on the very, very long and primary finish. This is even less evolved at the present time than the youthful Vaucrains and will be a very long-lived wine. Great juice! 2025-2075. **97**.

Domaine Alain Michelot (Nuits St. Georges)

In contrast to my visits at Domaines Chevillon and Gouges earlier in the day, the cellars at Domaine Michelot were full of wines that were in their “Greta Garbo” stage and wanted to just be left alone! I was not too surprised at this, as these are very cold cellars and the malos tend to be on the late side here in most years, and this was indeed the case again in 2012, as several of the cuvées were at the very tail end of malolactic fermentation or had only finished up a few weeks earlier and still had plenty of “memory” of malic acid or overt CO2 in evidence. Happily, a handful of the cuvées were a bit more advanced along their evolutionary track in the élevage and showed so beautifully that it was quite easy to extrapolate from these wines to the more recalcitrant customers in the cellar, and there is no doubt that the 2012 vintage chez Michelot will prove to be one of historic dimensions. Elodie Michelot had already bottled the new Nuits St. Georges Blanc bottling of “la Perrière Noblot” in September of 2013, prior to the start of the harvest, as the malo here had finished up around Easter and the wine was ready for

bottling. It is a very pretty wine that is still made from young vines (only five years old in 2012) which Elodie suggests "is perfect as a picnic wine or as an aperitif when you just want something nice to drink." I have little doubt that as the chardonnay vines here become older, this is going to climb up dramatically in seriousness, but it is already a very tasty wine and the 2012 version will delight any lucky enough to find a few bottles. The Michelot team was already beginning to rack at the time of my visit. Given how unsettled the cellar was in November, I have scored wines that were not too cranky about being tasted with a single numeral and those that were much more agitated from either the recent malolactic finishing up or in need of a racking have been scored within a range. I fully imagine that my scores will ultimately prove to be a bit on the conservative side for a great many of these wines, as the cuvées that were entirely on form and happy to be tasted clearly indicate that Elodie Michelot has hit the ball out of the park in 2012! This is a domaine that is currently at the top of its game and making just superb wines.

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge from Domaine Michelot was showing pretty well at the time of my visit, offering up lovely purity and succulence in its red fruity bouquet of cherries, blood orange, smoke, a dollop of cocoa and a nice base of soil. On the palate the wine is fullish, focused and shows good mid-palate depth, with just a touch of tannin, nice balance and perfectly sound length and grip on the bright and classy finish. A really fine example. 2014-2024. **87+**.

2012 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Alain Michelot

Like the Bourgogne bottling, the 2012 Morey AC had finished up its malo on the early side in the cellars here and was really showing very well indeed at the time of my visit. The wine offers up a deep and very sappy nose of red and black cherries, cocoa, gamebirds, a lovely base of dark soil tones and a nice touch of violets in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and sappy at the core, with lovely transparency, modest tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and soil-driven finish. This is a very classy village wine. 2018-2035. **89**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges "Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Alain Michelot

The old vine Nuits St. Georges AC had only recently finished up its malo and still had a bit of CO₂ to work out of solution on the palate. Nevertheless, it is quite easy to see that this is going to be a lovely example, as the nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, nutskin, a lovely base of soil and a complex, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very nicely soil-driven, with a good core of pure fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and primary finish. This will be excellent, but it was really still too close to the end of its malo to give it a single digit score. 2019-2035+. **89-90**.

2012 Morey St. Denis "les Charrières"- Domaine Alain Michelot

I really like the les Charrières bottling *chez* Michelot, as this is a very underrated Morey premier cru (of course, that could be said for almost all of the premier crus in Morey these days!) and I am sure that the 2012 is going to be a superb bottle. However, it was fairly reduced at the time of my visit, as the malo was quite late, and really not too happy about being disturbed. The nose under the reduction is quite fine, offering up scents of red and black cherries, cocoa, incipient notes of venison and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely soil-driven, with fine-grained tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused finish. This will be very, very good and if it does not ultimately prove to score at the top of its range (or higher) in the fullness of time, I would be shocked. 2021-2040+. **89-91+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “la Richemone”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The malolactic fermentation on the la Richemone 2012 had not even quite finished up at the time of my visit, and I would not even try to guess about this wine in the midst of its malo. I should note that it was very long, showed excellent soil signature and plenty of pure, crunchy fruit tones and it should be an excellent wine.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Champs Perdrix”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The Champs Perdrix 2012 had finished up its malolactic fermentation a few weeks before my visit and was showing very good potential, but it still had a bit of the “memory” of the malic acid about it on the backend and I am sure that folks who may have visited the domaine to taste several weeks after my visit will be have been treated to a wine of lovely textural nuances that simply were not possible to read in November. The bouquet is deep, pure and very fine, offering up scents of red and black cherries, pomegranate, gamebird and a lovely base of stony soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a lovely texture to the ripe tannins, fine focus, but a bit of edginess showing up on the long finish from the recently-completed malo. This is going to be excellent, without a doubt. 2022-2050. **91-92.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Alain Michelot

Happily, the 2012 Chaignots was completely on form and just singing at the time of my visit, as I was getting tired of extrapolation. The bouquet is a deep, pure and sappy mélange of cherries, red plums, cocoa, a beautifully complex base of soil, woodsmoke and a gentle touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with lovely purity and soil signature, suave, fine-grained tannins and outstanding backend length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. A really lovely bottle that shows just how good the more cranky wines in the cellar are going to be when they recover a bit from their rackings and late malos. 2020-2045+. **91+.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2012 les Cailles from Elodie Michelot was also completely on form and showing beautifully at the time of my visit. The deep, pure and very classy nose wafts from the glass in blend of red plums, cherries, a touch of blood orange, cocoa, nutskin, a fine signature of soil, woodsmoke and a gently floral topnote that cannot decide if it is violets or roses. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite plush and sappy on the attack, with a rock solid core, lovely focus and grip and superb mineral drive on the long and ripely tannic finish. This is a terrific example of les Cailles! 2020-2050. **93.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2012 Vaucrains *chez* Michelot still had just a touch of CO₂ in it from the recently finished malolactic fermentation, but its potential was self-evident. The bouquet is deep, pure and nascently complex, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, pomegranate, cocoa, a beautifully complex base of soil, gamebird and a topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core, great backend mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and excellent grip on the long and still quite primary finish. This is going to be excellent and at least the equal of the marvelous les Cailles in 2012. 2022-2050+. **93-94.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2012 Les St. Georges from Elodie Michelot was singing every bit as much as the marvelous les Cailles at the time of my visit and this is a great wine in the making. The deep, pure and sappy nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of cherries, red plums, a touch of blood orange, cocoa, nutskin, and a simply superb base of complex minerality. On the palate the

wine is deep, full-bodied and again, strikingly pure on the attack, with a bottomless core, ripe, very fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly focused and balanced finish. This is a very red fruity rendition of young Les St. Georges (more akin to the 2012 version at Domaine Chevillon than the more classically black fruity rendition *chez Gouges*) and is going to be a reference point wine from Domaine Michelot for decades to come! 2022-2060. **94.**

2012 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Alain Michelot

The third vintage of Clos Vougeot from the Michelot family is a legend in the making. Like the Vaucrains, there was still just a touch of CO2 remaining in the wine from its fairly recently-completed malo, but the majestic quality of this wine was very easy to read. The great nose shows of superb depth and purity in its mix of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a marvelously complex base of soil tones, cocoa and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and bottomless to the core, with wonderful sappiness aligned to striking transparency. The finish is very, very long, perfectly focused and balanced and defined by fine-grained tannins and superb grip. This is one of the very best Clos Vougeots produced today and is a must addition to any well-stocked Burgundy cellar. 2022-2060+. **95-96.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “la Perrière Noblot” Blanc- Domaine Alain Michelot

These are only five year old vines and this wine is going to gain in depth and soil signature as the years go by, but there is nothing wrong with reveling in its wonderfully pure and exuberant fruit tones right now! The very pretty nose is a blend of apple, peach, sweet almonds, chalky soil tones and a lovely topnote of honeysuckle. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, round and juicy, with fine framing acids and lovely focus on the long and wide open finish. It will not make old bones, but for drinking over the next six to seven years, there is a lot of enjoyment to be had here. 2014-2020. **89.**

Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Camus-Bruchon (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Guillaume Camus was fighting a bit of a cold at the time of my visit in mid-November, and I am sure he would have preferred to have been in bed tackling it, rather than meeting the long line of tasters at the door. He reported that the 2012 crop here was down thirty percent from the relatively low yields of 2011, and fully fifty percent off from what could be termed a “normal crop” for the domaine. As was the case in several other cellars I visited on this trip, he had racked the entire cellar only a week before my visit, as the late harvest of 2013 had not given him the time to do so a bit earlier in the fall. The only wine that was still in barrel at the time of my visit was the Beaune “Clos du Roi”, as the malo for this wine had been quite a bit later than the remainder of the lineup and it was not yet ready for its racking. Despite catching the 2012s here at a less than ideal time, it was quite clear that the entire range is very strong and most of the wines share the more velvety textural side to their tannins that are more often found in the Côte de Nuits in this vintage, rather than in the Côte de Beaune. I have scored the wines that were still a bit shaken from the racking within a range, but would fully expect them to place at the high end of the range once they have fully recovered from the agitation of the racking, and for those that were singing at the time of my visit, I have given them the customary single numerical ranking. Guillaume Camus is really making great wines right now and Domaine Camus-Bruchon must clearly be ranked as one of the brightest stars in the Côte de Beaune these days!

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2012 Camus-Bruchon Bourgogne rouge was showing very well at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, red currants, lovely spice tones, a fine base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a plump core of fruit, fine transparency and just a touch of backend tannin adding grip and structure on the long finish. Good juice. 2015-2025. **88.**

2012 Chorey-lès-Beaune- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2012 Chorey-lès-Beaune from Domaine Camus-Bruchon was also showing very well at the time of tasting, delivering a deep and pure bouquet of red and black cherries, cocoa, nutskin, a lovely signature of soil and a fine topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and bright, with lovely mid-palate depth, excellent focus and soil drive, suave tannins and a very long, vibrant and classy finish. This is very elegant this year! 2016-2030+. **89.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume Camus' 2012 Savigny *villages* is another very strong wine in the cellars this year, offering up a deep and excellent nose of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa, a fine base of stony minerality, a bit of bonfire and a gentle framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and intensely flavored, with excellent purity, a sappy core, ripe tannins and a very long, fairly youthful and soil-driven finish. Fine juice. 2017-2035. **90.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Pimentiers” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Given Jean-Marie Fourrier's observation that old vines suffered the most during the problematic flowering of 2012, I have to imagine that there cannot be too many barrels of this superb Pimentiers in the cellars, as these vines are in excess of ninety years of age! The wine is stunning, wafting from the glass in an aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, pomegranate, a fine base of minerality, gamebirds, cocoa and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great core, lovely mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. Young Pimentiers can sometimes be a little rustic out of the blocks, but the inherent elegance of 2012 has left its fingerprints all over this stellar bottle! 2020-2050. **92.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Grands Liards” V. V.- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The equally old Camus vines in Grands Liards have also produced a superb example of the vintage, but this wine was not quite as nicely recovered from its recent racking as the Pimentiers. The bouquet is quite obviously very deep and classy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, a touch of dark berry, coffee bean, woodsmoke, lovely minerality and a gentle topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with suave, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and brightness, nascent complexity and a very long, well-balanced and soil-driven finish. This too will be excellent. 2020-2050. **92-93.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Gravains”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2012 Gravains is clearly going to be another outstanding example of the vintage, but it too was not quite recovered from the racking. The bouquet is deep, pure and very promising, as it wafts from the glass in a mix of pomegranate, cherries, roses, a complex base of soil tones, orange zest, woodsmoke and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very long, with superb focus and backend energy, a sappy core and outstanding length and grip on the poised and classy finish. I am sure that this is going to be stellar and I only wish I could have caught it when it was singing! 2022-2060. **93-94.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2012 Camus-Bruchon les Lavières was also still in the process of fully regaining its equilibrium after the racking, but it is also quite clearly going to be another outstanding example of the vintage. The lovely bouquet delivers scents of red and black cherries, pomegranate, violets, stony minerality, incipient notes of gamebird, cocoa, fresh thyme and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very transparent, with a sappy core, very elegant tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very long and tangy finish. Great juice in the making. 2022-2060. **93-94.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Narbantons” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Like Pimentiers, Narbantons is another *terroir* than can be a bit “nobly rustic” out of the blocks and take time to show its inherent elegance, but the 2012 vintage has taken care of this characteristic and this is a supremely refined young vintage of this fine wine. The deep and very classy nose offers up scents of cherries, red plums, pomegranate, a lovely and quite complex base of minerality, gentle spice tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very transparent, with a lovely core, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and excellent, nascent complexity on the long, suave and very promising finish. What a troika of superb Savigny premier crus *chez* Camus this year! 2022-2060. **93-94.**

2012 Beaune “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2012 Clos du Roi was decidedly behind the other wines in the cellar this year in terms of evolution, and it consequently did not share the same stunning transparency (yet?) of the other wines in the range. As the malo was so late to finish here, there was still just a whisper of coarse CO2 in evidence on the finish here, but I have no doubt this is going to be very, very good in 2012. The bouquet is a blend of black cherries, plums, incipient gamebird, a bit of bonfire, lovely soil tones and a stylish framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and focused, with a sappy core, ripe tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This will be lovely. 2020-2050. **91-92+.**

2012 Pommard “les Arvelets”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The Camus family’s small parcel of les Arvelets was hit pretty hard by the hail in 2012, so there is only a single barrel of this wine in this vintage (out of a normal two and a half barrels). It is a pity, as this will be a superb example of the vintage as well, as it too shows off an awful lot of the vintage’s inherent elegance right out of the blocks. The excellent nose jumps from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, pomegranate, nutskin, a beautifully complex base of soil, a touch of mustard seed and a bit of white pepper in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with chewy tannins, fine focus and balance and a very long, focused and quite primary finish. Fine juice in the making, but this will need some time. 2022-2060. **92-94.**

Domaine Chandon de Briailles (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

François and Claude de Nicolay certainly had their share of challenges in 2012 and 2013, as not only was there all of the difficulties of the 2012 and 2013 vintages to contend with, but on top of that, all the rain in the summer of 2013 pushed the small river in Savigny to overflow its banks and one of the Chandon de Briailles cellars was flooded and barrels were floating around until the waters subsided! François noted that they were lucky that there was very little hail in Savigny in 2012 (the 2013 vintage was a completely different story and they have lost a huge percentage of their crop in this coming year, with some vineyards so badly damaged that they will not make any wine from them and there is a real question that of how

well the vines will recover from the damage in this coming year!) and the crop loads for the Savigny wines were the best of the family's entire range in 2012. As is typical when I visit here in November, some of the wines were still in barrel, while others were already racked and assembled in tank for bottling in the spring, while a couple of the whites were already bottled in September. Despite not every wine overly sanguine about being tasted at the time of my visit, it was very clear that the 2012 vintage is a ringing success at Domaine Chandon de Briailles and there are some stellar wines in the making in these cellars this year. I did not taste the domaine's Bourgogne Rouge "Cuvée Louise" this year. The 2012 white wines from the de Nicolay family are also excellent and cut in a quite forward and accessible style that will make them delicious to drink right out of the blocks, but also with the requisite framing acids and balance to age long and gracefully as well. They possess the concentration of the low yields of the vintage, but are not overly concentrated and are really quite classic examples of their respective appellations. I would think that they are quite similar to the domaine's 1992 whites (which I have tasted recently, but did not have in their youth) with perhaps a bit more depth and transparency. They are a very strong set of wines as well, though far more forward in style than the Chandon de Briailles reds in 2012.

Vins Blancs

2012 Pernand-Vergelesses "Ile de Vergelesses" Blanc- Dom. Chandon de Briailles

The 2102 Ile de Vergelesses Blanc had already been bottled in September of 2013 and the wine was showing very well at the time of my visit. This is a deep, bright and perfectly balanced example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a ripe and refined blend of quince, tangerine, beeswax, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely concentrated (but certainly not overly so!), with lovely focus and balance, bright, framing acids and excellent length and grip on the fresh and vibrant finish. This will drink very, very well in its youth, but is balanced well enough to age as long as self-control may last. 2014-2025+. **90+**.

2012 Corton Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Corton Blanc is another concentrated, wide open and very classy example of the vintage that is going to be very hard not to drink in its youth! The deep, complex and very classy nose soars from the glass in a blend of pear, peach, clementine, lovely soil tones, *crème patissière*, orange blossoms and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with superb complexity, a succulent core, fine acidity and a lovely sense of backend minerality that almost vibrates on the long and perfectly focused finish. Fine juice and really tasty out of the blocks! 2014-2025+. **92**.

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The domaine's 2012 Corton-Charlemagne is also quite forward in this vintage, but with stunning mineral drive, impeccable balance and plenty of ripe acidity to also carry it far down the road. But, it is going to be very, very hard not to want to drink this stellar wine in its relative youth, as it is complex and wide open for business right out of the blocks! The brilliant nose delivers a very complex blend of apple, pear, deep and complex chalkiness, a nice touch of pink grapefruit, dried flowers, citrus zest and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully delineated, with bottomless depth, sound, framing acids and laser-like focus and great grip on the very, very long, soil-driven and simply delicious finish. Great juice! 2014-2030. **94**.

Vins Rouges

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Saucours”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 les Saucours is going to be a really lovely village wine. This was already assembled in tank, but was showing very well in its complex aromatic mix of black cherries, a touch of dark berry, cocoa, woodsmoke, Savigny spice tones, incipient gamebirds and a lovely base of soil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite ample on the attack, with lovely focus and purity, modest tannins and excellent length and grip. This should drink well from an early age. 2017-2035. **89-90.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Fournaux”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Fournaux from Chandon de Briailles was still in barrel at the time of my visit and was really singing. The deep and utterly superb nose jumps from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, dark berries, gamebirds, Savigny spices, a lovely base of dark soil, woodsmoke, currant leaf and a hint of the gamebirds to come with further bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, moderate, ripe tannins and a very, very long, beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2019-2045+. **92+.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières” from Domaine Chandon de Briailles was also still in barrel and was really showing brilliant potential. The deep, pure and utterly refined bouquet is a blend of black cherries, red currants, woodsmoke, a beautifully complex base of minerality, vinesmoke, a nice touch of spices from the stems, incipient notes of both orange peel and coffee and a topnote of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and quite sappy at the core, with great focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the nascently complex and very, very transparent finish. Great wine. 2020-2050+. **93+.**

2012 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 les Vergelesses had already been assembled into tank prior to my visit, but the wine was showing just fine and is clearly going to be lovely. The classic nose delivers scents of dark berries, black cherries, coffee bean, incipient notes of venison, iron-infused soil tones, woodsmoke and a spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a lovely core of pure fruit, ripe tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. A fine example. 2018-2035+. **91+.**

2012 Pernand-Vergelesses “Ile de Vergelesses”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Ile de Vergelesses was still in barrel and was really singing in November, jumping from the glass in a complex aromatic mélange of red and black cherries, currant leaf, woodsmoke, a nice touch of youthful stems, iron-like soil tones, gamebirds and exotic spices tones of cardamom and allspice. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and even more defined by its *terroir* than the lovely les Vergelesses, with a rock solid core, suave, chewy tannins, bright acids and beautiful focus and grip on the very, very long, classic finish. Great potential. 2020-2060. **93+.**

2012 Aloxe-Corton “les Valozières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Aloxe-Corton “les Valozières” was still in barrel at the time of our visit, and though this wine is going to be lovely, it did suffer a bit having to follow on the heels of the stellar Ile de Vergelesses! The bouquet is bright, pure and quite vibrant in its mélange of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a bit of game, lovely spice tones and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely broad-shouldered, with a good core, ripe, chewy tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused finish. This is not the most refined of *terroirs*

and there is a bit of chunkiness to the wine, but it is also a very good bottle in the making that may have shown even better if served a bit earlier in the lineup! 2019-2035. **89.**

2012 Corton “Maréchaudes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Corton “Maréchaudes” from the de Nicolay family had already been assembled into tank prior to my visit, but the wine was showing lovely potential. The complex and very classy nose wafts from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, a bit of roasted venison, cocoa, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a touch of youthful stems and a very stylish and gentle underpinning of Corton spice tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a fien core, very suave tannins, lovely focus and balance and a long, pure and classy finish. This is going to be very high class juice! 2020-2055. **92-94.**

2012 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The domaine’s Bressandes was still in barrel and absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The gorgeous bouquet is a complex and very pure blend of red and black cherries, gamebirds, Asian spices, iron-like soil tones, coffee, woodsmoke, cocoa and a touch of fresh nutmeg in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure on the attack and very stony in its soil profile, with a sappy core, superb transparency, ripe, well-integrated tannins and simply stunning length and grip on the young and very, very refined finish. A great bottle of Corton in the making! 2022-2060. **95.**

2012 Corton “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2012 Clos du Roi had already been racked into tank, but it was clearly the star of this superb lineup this year! The great nose soars from the glass in a mix of red and black plums, cherries, cocoa, a very, very complex base of soil, raw cocoa, gamebirds, woodsmoke and a nice touch of violets in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a superb synthesis of transparency and sappy fruit, very refined, substantial tannins and outstanding length and grip on the nascently complex, very classic finish. A great wine in the making. 2022-2065. **95-96.**

Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

I arrived to taste with Hugues Pavelot on the 12th of November, which was only a few weeks after the entire cellar of 2012s had been racked, so my timing here was pretty similar to my visit two years ago to taste the 2010s from barrel, as those wines had also just been racked a short time prior to my arrival. I did not write down what percentage of the crop the Pavelot family had lost due to the short yields of 2012, but there were nowhere near as many barrels in the cellars as one normally finds here, and 2013 is going to be even a shorter crop, as Savigny was hit full-bore with hail in this latter vintage. Needless to say, Monsieur Pavelot was not in the best of moods at the time of my visit, as like so many other vignerons in the Côte de Beaune, he is not going to have a whole lot of wine for his clients in these two vintages. Despite the obviously very good quality of his 2012 wines, I wish that my timing for my visit had been a bit further removed from the racking, as it seems certainly possible that my scores may ultimately prove to be a tad on the conservative side for these wines and I would fully expect them to show even more textural generosity as they move further away from their racking. Most of the 2012 reds here seemed to be quite black fruity in profile this year, with very good structures, quite polished tannins for the Côte de Beaune, and very good potential for long-term cellaring. 2012 is the second vintage here for the fine new addition of the les Lavières bottling (which effectively replaces the Narbantons that the family produced previously, as a cousin took back their vines in Narbantons after the 2010 vintage) and the wine is absolutely stellar this year. Across the board,

the Pavelot 2012s are an excellent range of wines and I hope that 2014 will see Mother Nature relent a bit in the Côte de Beaune and we can see a normal-sized, high quality crop in the cellars a year from now!

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune AC from the Pavelots is going to be a very nice bottle, as it offers up a fine nose of black cherries, blackberries, Savigny spice tones, a touch of game, dark soil, currant leaf and a discreet base of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely fleshy on the attack, with a good core, modest tannins and fine length and grip on the focused finish. A very polished 2012 *villages*. 2016-2035. **88+**.

2012 Aloxe-Corton- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Aloxe *villages* is another very pretty AC in the making, with the inherent sappiness of the vintage very much in evidence on both the nose and palate. The complex bouquet is a blend of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebirds, dark chocolate and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush, with a sappy core, fine focus and grip, nicely integrated tannins and impressive focus and grip on the long, classy finish. Good juice. 2017-2035. **89**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Peuillets”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 les Peuillets from Hugues Pavelot is really a fine wine in the making, with lovely transparency and a fine sense of elegance to the structure. The excellent bouquet offers up scents of cassis, woodsmoke, espresso, fresh herbs, dark soil tones, currant leaf and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very nicely delineated, with a lovely core, moderate tannins and excellent length and grip on the soil-driven and classy finish. This is going to be a lovely bottle in four or five years. 2018-2040. **90+**.

2012 Beaune “Bressandes”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Beaune “Bressandes” from Domaine Pavelot is a very pretty wine, with a ripe and buxom personality that will offer early drinkability. The wide open nose offers up scents of black cherries, dark berries, a touch of currant leaf, dark chocolate, charred wood, a lovely base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, plump and with a nice sense of sappiness at the core, with fairly modest tannins, fine balance and good length and grip on the succulent finish. There is not quite the same precision on the palate evident here as is found in the les Peuillets, but this will be a lovely wine for more near-term consumption. 2017-2035. **89+**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Serpentières”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Serpentières *chez* Pavelot was probably a bit more upset from its recent racking than several of the other wines in the cellar, and presented a far more reserved profile as a result. There is impressive depth and nascent complexity here, as it offers up an aromatic constellation of blackberries, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, incipient notes of gamebird, currant leaf and a fine base of stony soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and fairly reticent finish. I am sure this is more generous than it is currently showing, and there is little doubt that it will be a lovely bottle with some cellaring. 2019-2045. **91-92**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Guettes was equally reticent at the time of my visit, but this always seems to me to be a slightly more suave *terroir* out of the blocks than the Serpentières, and so it was a bit easier to taste through its post-racking grumpiness. The bouquet is deep, nascently complex and

will be very refined in the fullness of time, wafting from the glass in a mix of cassis, black cherries, French roast, charred wood, dark soil, again a nice touch of currant leaf, bitter chocolate and a dollop of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with a fine core of fruit, excellent focus and balance, ripe tannins and a very long, soil-driven and primary finish. This is going to be excellent. 2020-2045. **92+**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”-Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 les Lavières from Hugues Pavelot is a ringing success, as these fifty-six year-old vines have produced a truly stunning bottle of young Savigny. Like many of the top premier crus in the cellars this year, the 2012 les Lavières is still a bit tight from its recent racking, but there is a great wine lurking here, with a bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, a nice touch of violet in the upper register, dark chocolate, a lovely base of soil and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave and pure on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, outstanding soil signature, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and very classy, young finish. This will be a great bottle. 2018-2045. **93**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Gravains”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Gravains is equally fine this year, as the Pavelot family has made a stellar example of this great *terroir*. The bouquet is a very pure blend of black cherries, pomegranate, bitter chocolate, a touch of citrus zest, complex, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very minerally in personality, with a rock solid core, ripe tannins, tangy acids and outstanding purity and grip on the very long and transparent finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2020-2050. **93**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “la Dominode”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Dominode was a bit more reserved at the time of my visit than the Gravains, but it too showed excellent potential. The deep and primary nose offers up scents of dark berries, cassis, a touch of bonfire, currant leaf, dark soil tones, espresso, a touch of chicory and a nice framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure on the attack and tightly-knit, with excellent mid-palate concentration, firm, chewy tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. This will need time, but it will be a very fine example of the vintage. 2022-2050. **93**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc from Domaine Pavelot is a lovely wine, wafting from the glass in a very pretty and succulent blend of pear, crab apple, chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a nice touch of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and wide open in personality, with fine mid-palate concentration, good focus and fine length and grip on the juicy finish. This will drink very well from day one, but should also age very well. 2014-2022+. **89**.

2012 Corton Blanc- Jean-Marc et Hugues Domaine Pavelot

The Corton Blanc from the Pavelot family is stellar in 2012. As there is only a single barrel of this wine, it has been raised in a one year-old barrel, which supplies just the right, discreet touch of vanillin oak to the wine's aromatic and flavor profile. The stunning nose jumps from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, acacia blossoms, a beautifully complex base of chalky soil tones, citrus zest and that touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a great core of fruit, excellent complexity and focus, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the pure and classy finish. High class juice! 2015-2035. **94**.



Beaune

Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils (Beaune)

I arrived at Maison Bouchard Père et Fils late on the afternoon of November 20th to taste through the 2012s here and found the white wines absolutely singing and amongst the most brilliant whites of the entire trip, but with some of the red wines so grumpy and out of sorts that I really did not know what to make of them. I did not anticipate the reds being in such a cantankerous mood, as the premier crus here had been racked all the way back in June, and the grand crus had not yet been racked (but were not reduced at all) and theoretically, they all should have been in a good place for evaluation. However, several were really tight, shut down and clenched behind their tannins in the stage that I found them and I really had a very hard time getting a read on where they were headed. This is pretty rare for me, as I have been tasting out of barrel in Burgundy since the 1988 vintage and generally do not have these type of issues with young Burgundies in barrel, but I really have no idea about a number of the red wines that I tasted at Maison Bouchard. Rather than be unfair to the wines in question, I have not posted my notes on the wines that were showing completely out of sorts at the time of my visit, and will hope to have a chance to revisit the domaine on my spring trip and taste these wines again and expect to catch them in a far more flattering moment to taste. However, I do understand that this is a very, very short crop here and it may not be possible to do so after the wines are bottled, as the Bouchard team may need every single bottle to try and placate clients who will be receiving such short allocations in the first place. It just seems to me that this is a far more proper

approach to the wines that were not showing well, rather than posting notes on the wines at a particularly awkward moment in their élevage and then not presenting an accurate picture on the actual quality of the wines. It was not all of the reds that were in this phase of their evolution, but there were enough of them that were extremely cranky to warrant this more cautious approach. But, as I said at the outset, all of the whites were in beautiful form and there was no need to worry about their ultimate evolutions. The sole exception was the Meursault “les Clous” bottling, which had just been filtered the day before my visit and was understandably shaken from this process, but it was long, complex and very nicely soil-driven and I am sure it will be a lovely wine- I just had the bad luck to catch it in an agitated state after the filtration.

White Wines of Bouchard Père et Fils

2012 Bourgogne Chardonnay Réserve- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

As was also the case with the Bourgogne rouge, the 2012 Bourgogne blanc was bottled in June of 2013 and is a good solid example. The bouquet is a pretty blend of pear, apple, a touch of quince, Rully-like stoniness and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, juicy and wide open in style, with nice framing acids and good length and grip on the slightly four-square finish. A good solid bottle. 2014-2020. **85.**

2012 Pouilly-Fuissé- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Pouilly-Fuissé from Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils is a very fine bottle and a significant step up from the Bourgogne in terms of complexity. The bouquet offers up a fine blend of apple, pear, stony soil tones, citrus peel, a nice touch of *Mâconnais* toastiness and lime blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, bright acids and very good focus and grip on the long and well-balanced finish. A lovely bottle of Pouilly-Fuissé. 2014-2020+. **89.**

2012 Beaune du Château “Premier Cru” Blanc- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Beaune du Château Blanc is an excellent wine that will drink very well right from the start. The deep and juicy nose offers up scents of pear, apple, a touch of beeswax, citrus peel a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a nice dollop of smokiness up high. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and generous on the attack, with a fine core and soil signature, bright acids and a long, well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2014-2030+. **90+.**

2012 Beaune “Clos St. Landry” Blanc- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Clos St. Landry is a superb example of the vintage, jumping from the glass in a refined and focused aromatic blend of pear, white peach, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and succulent at the core, with bright acids, a very wide open personality and lovely length and grip on the bouncy and very classy finish. This will certainly be very tasty right out of the blocks, but I would be inclined to at least give it a year or two in the cellar to allow its secondary layers of complexity to start to emerge. 2015-2030+. **91+.**

2012 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

I love Maison Bouchard’s Meursault “Genevrières” and their 2012 is outstanding. The wine was raised in fifteen percent new wood, which really allows its underlying *terroir* to take front and center stage in the wine. The stunning bouquet soars from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, hazelnut, salty, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a delicate framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, zesty acids and outstanding focus and nascent complexity on the long and very classy finish. *Chapeau!* 2016-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The domaine’s 2012 Perrières is even better! The deep, complex and utterly classic bouquet offers up an aromatic constellation of peach, pear, almonds, a touch of iodine, a very, very complex base of stony minerality, white flowers and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very pure and more reserved in profile than the stellar Genevrières, with a great core of fruit, ripe, vibrant acids, laser-like focus and stunning length and grip on the rapier-like finish. A great, great wine. 2018-2040+. **95.**

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

Maison Bouchard’s parcel in Corton-Charlemagne have a plain easterly exposure which helps them retain raciness and minerality, and these qualities are very much amplified in this gorgeous young wine. This is a powerfully-built young vintage of Corton Charlie, as the low yields here have concentrated every element to a certain degree, but this is not an over-sized and too intense version of the vintage, but rather a perfectly poised and balanced wine of stunning depth. The great bouquet is a blend of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, a bottomless base of chalky minerality, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully complex, with a rock solid core, crisp acids, laser-like focus and exceptional length and grip on the pure and vibrant finish. Another absolutely stunning young wine! 2020-2060. **95.**

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Bouchard Chevalier-Montrachet “*Normale*” is a stunning wine, with a bit more of an inviting structure out of the blocks than the even more refined la Cabotte. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a very deep and pure blend of pear, tangerine, chalky minerality, a touch of almond paste, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and almost silky in its texture out of the blocks, with a superb core, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long, elegant and perfectly poised finish. Great juice. 2020-2060. **96.**

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet “la Cabotte”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 la Cabotte is brilliant wine, with just a touch more precision than in the regular Chevalier, as well as a bit more reserved personality out of the blocks. The utterly refined nose delivers an aromatic constellation of pear, apple, lemon, chalky minerality, pastry cream, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, strikingly pure and precise, with a rock solid core, racy acids and stunning length and grip on the young, perfectly balanced and utterly seamless finish. This too is pure magic in 2012! 2020-2060. **97.**

2012 Montrachet- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Maison Bouchard Montrachet is also brilliant, with a slightly deeper-pitched personality than either superb rendition of Chevalier in the cellars, but with the same stunning sense of perfect balance and great purity. The bouquet is a celestial mélange of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, a touch of honeysuckle, white soil tones and a fine framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and powerful, with a rock solid core, laser-like focus and stunning length and grip on the youthful, powerful and impeccably balanced finish. Brilliant wine. 2020-2060. **97.**

Red Wines of Bouchard Père et Fils

2012 Bourgogne Pinot Noir Réserve- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge had already been bottled and was showing quite well at the time of my visit. The bouquet is a nicely complex blend of cherries, red currants, a touch of gamebird, coffee and a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and has a good core

for its level, with moderate tannins and good length and grip on the finish. A good, sturdy example of Bourgogne. 2014-2022+. **87.**

2012 Beaune du Château “Premier Cru”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Beaune du Château bottling was showing very well, as it wafts from the glass in a fine aromatic mélange of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil, gentle notes of gamebird and a nice framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with a good core of fruit and a long, ripely tannic and well-balanced finish. A lovely bottle in the making. 2018-2040. **89.**

2012 Beaune “Clos de la Mousse”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Clos de la Mousse was also very much on form in November, with this *Monopole* of the domaine having been raised in about one third new wood in this vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and classy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, squab, a complex base of soil tones, cocoa, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with a fine signature of soil, tangy acids, suave tannins and a long, soil-driven and nascently complex finish. Good juice. 2020-2050. **91+.**

2012 Beaune “Grèves” Vigne de l’Enfant Jésus- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 l’Enfant Jésus is stellar and was one of the best red wines I tasted in the cellars at Maison Bouchard on this trip. The deep, complex and beautifully pure nose soars from the glass in a blend of cherries, plums, a touch of red currant, woodsmoke, gamebird, lovely minerality, coffee, violets and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and youthful finish. High class. 2020-2060. **93.**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 les Cailles from Maison Bouchard was also very much on form at the time of my visit, as these fifty year-old vines have really turned out a beautiful wine in this vintage. The superb nose offers up an aromatic constellation of sappy black cherries, sweet dark berries, coffee bean, an excellent base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully plush on the attack, with a sappy core, stellar soil inflection, ripe tannins and excellent grip on the very long and beautifully balanced finish. An outstanding wine. 2022-2055+. **93.**

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Maison Bouchard Père et Fils

The 2012 Chapelle-Chambertin was also showing great potential when I tasted it, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, cocoa powder, grilled meat, woodsmoke, a touch of chocolate, lovely soil tones and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and nascent complexity, ripe, well-integrated tannins and outstanding length and grip on the tangy and still quite primary finish. Lovely juice in the making. 2025-2075. **94.**

Maison Joseph Drouhin (Beaune)

Perhaps nothing better underscored the brutally short crop of 2012 more than the tastings at Maison Joseph Drouhin this year. Due to the very low yields in this vintage, the domaine organized only two days of tastings for their top wines this year, with a morning and an afternoon session for each day, and these were the only times that the most limited wines in the range were shown this past November. This is completely unprecedented at Maison Drouhin, and shows just how hard it is going to be to find many of the wines in 2012. The Drouhin family purchased an optical sorting device for this vintage as well, to further improve their quality

control of the grapes coming into the cuverie this year (they already utilize two different vibrating sorting tables), and I am sure that the optical sorters were added to the lineup to help guard against the inclusion of any sun-burned berries, as these were really the biggest threat in 2012. The Drouhin winemaking team also treated the 2012 vintage a bit differently than in several recent years, as they cut back a bit on the number of whole clusters they used in this vintage, with an average of around twenty percent of the stems retained this year (with variations of course depending on the quality of the stems in each parcel), which is a bit lower than it has been in the recent past. Some of the red wine cuvées also saw a bit longer pre-fermentation maceration period, while the white wines in the Côte de Beaune saw almost no battonage at all in this vintage. The macerations during and after fermentation were also extended for some wines as well, and many of the Côte de Nuits reds spend an extended period this year on their fine lees. With the Côte de Beaune reds that were most severely hailed upon (like Clos des Mouches), the pre-fermentation cold soak was extended, so that the macerations during fermentations could be a bit shorter. The harvest in 2012 started on September 19th in the Côte de Beaune this year, and on the 24th of September for the family's fine estate of Domaine de Vaudon in Chablis. As the Drouhins have a superb lineup of Côte de Beaune reds, the depredations here in 2012 were keenly felt, so that, for example, there will not be a bottling of their fine Savigny-lès-Beaune "Fournaux" this year, as the quantity was so small that the team decided it was better to just blend it into the Savigny "villages" cuvée in 2012. There are also several new and exciting additions to the traditional lineup at Maison Joseph Drouhin this year, as the family was able to enter into new contracts to produce bottlings of Gevrey-Chambertin "Cazetiers" and "Lavaux St. Jacques", and there is also a new bottling of Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet in the cellars starting in 2012. Further north in Chablis, the family has entered into a new, long-term contract to purchase more fruit from Montée de Tonnerre, so that they will now have enough supply to produce this premier cru every year (in the past, most years saw their very small parcel in Montée de Tonnerre blended into their Premier Cru bottling) and they have purchased a small slice in Fourchaume as well.

This is a domaine at the absolute top of its game and there are some stellar 2012s waiting in the wings, but it is going to be no small task to locate one's favorites from Maison Drouhin in this vintage, as the quantities are very seriously down and the worldwide popularity of this superb domaine has never been higher! But, as is the case with so many of the very top Burgundy estates in 2012, please keep in mind that this will be a very rewarding vintage to cast one's net a bit wider than usual, and if one cannot get the usual allocation of Chambolle-Musigny "Premier Cru" or "les Amoureuses" this year, do not, I repeat, do not turn up your nose at an offering of Nuits St. Georges "Procès" or Morey St. Denis "Clos Sorbé", as these are wines of stunning potential in their own right and a decade down the road, each and every bottle of 2012 Joseph Drouhin in the cellar is going to be a treasured wine! As is often the case in November, the 2012 Drouhin wines were in varying stages of their élevage, as several of the wines had already been bottled while others were assembled in tank and were in various points in their preparation for imminent bottling, while other wines were still in barrel and would not be racked for a while. Most of the Chablis premier and grand cru cuvées had been bottled in October and early November, so I may have caught them at an inopportune moment, and consequently, I have scored those wines within a range. Some of the reds, such as the Chambolle and Gevrey villages bottlings, were assembled in tank, but seemed a bit agitated and probably were just recently racked into tanks, and where this has been the case, I have also scored these

wines within a range to be fair to them. Given how well the red wines showed that were clearly in good form during my two visits, I would fully expect that those that are scored within a range to place at the top digit once they are back on form. The specially organized tasting of the Drouhin top bottlings from 2012 was held on November 14th, and I made my second visit to taste at the domaine on November 26th, to sample some of the wines that I normally cover and which were not part of the first tasting. I did not taste the Corton “Bressandes”, Clos St. Denis, Grands Echézeaux or Bonnes-Mares on either visit, as I assume the quantities were just too short for sampling in 2012. There are some absolutely magical examples of the 2012 vintage in the Drouhin cellars this year, and I would be very surprised if the few wines that seemed a bit out of sorts were also not stellar, and once they have had a chance to bounce back a bit from rackings, sulfur adjustments or the like they will also prove to be exemplary. Several of the red wines chez Drouhin this year reminded me strikingly of their counterparts from the 1993 vintage- not a bad thing at all in my book!

Vins Blancs de Maison Drouhin

2012 Laforêt Bourgogne Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Laforêt Bourgogne Blanc has turned out quite well, with the concentration of the vintage giving this a bit more mid-palate stuffing than customary. The very pretty wine is a blend of apple, pineapple, a nice base of soil and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and juicy, with a good core, sound, framing acids and very good length and grip on the wide open finish. Good juice. 2014-2019. **87.**

2012 Mâcon-Lugny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family’s first vintage of Mâcon-Lugny was in 2011, and the 2012 is a fine follow-up to the inaugural release. This wine is raised entirely in stainless steel, and in 2012, a bit of the malo was blocked to give the wine more bounce. The very pretty nose offers up scents of peach, apple, lemon zest, chalky soil tones and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is fullish, crisp and quite suave on the attack, with good mid-palate succulence, sound framing acids and very nice length and grip. An excellent bottle of Mâcon. 2014-2020. **89.**

2012 St. Véran- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 St. Véran from Maison Drouhin is also a very nice wine, but it is a bit more “toasty” in personality than the Mâcon-Lugny and perhaps not quite as elegant in this vintage. The bouquet is a stylish blend of apple, tangerine, wheat toast, orange peel and gentle smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a bit more cut than the Mâcon-Lugny, but not quite the same degree of refinement this year. Good juice. 2014-2020. **88.**

2012 Pouilly-Vinzelles- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I have really enjoyed the Pouilly-Vinzelles bottling from Maison Drouhin since they started to regularly produce it a few years ago, and this ranks right up there as amongst my favorite bottlings from the *Mâconnais* these days. The 2012 version is excellent, wafting from the glass in a mix of white peaches, lemon, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off plenty of the vintage’s inherent elegance, with a fine core, crisp acids and impressive complexity and grip on the long and classy finish. Fine juice. 2014-2020+. **90.**

2012 Rully Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Rully Blanc from Maison Joseph Drouhin is one of those more concentrated wines from the vintage, but in the context of Rully, this works very nicely to the advantage of the wine. The bouquet is a very pretty blend of apple, white peach, a touch of tangerine, a nice base

of minerality and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with affine core, juicy acids and good backend mineral drive on the long and zesty finish. Good juice, without perhaps quite the polish of wines such as the Pouilly-Vinzelles or Saint-Romain Blanc, but with plenty of personality. 2014-2020. **89.**

2012 Montagny “Premier Cru” Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Montagny Premier Cru is usually one of my favorites at the lower level from Maison Drouhin, but the 2012 seemed just a touch chunky in personality this year and not quite as elegant as it customarily is at this stage in its evolution. Perhaps I just caught it at an inopportune moment? The nose is certainly very pretty in its mélange of apple, peach, stony soil tones, citrus peel and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and just a bit four-square, with sound framing acids and pretty good length and grip on the wide open finish. This is usually a paradigm of *Côte Chalonnaise* elegance, but this year it seems just a bit heavy-handed out of the blocks. 2014-2020. **87+?**

2012 Saint-Romain Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Saint-Romain Blanc from Maison Drouhin is very lovely this year, wafting from the glass in a stylish blend of apple, white peach, lemon blossoms, chalky soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and wide open in personality, with lovely framing acids, fine focus and complexity and a long, succulent and beautifully balanced finish. This will not make old bones, but for drinking over the next six to eight years, there is an awful lot of pleasure to be had here. A great value! 2014-2020+. **89+.**

2012 Côte de Beaune Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Côte de Beaune Blanc from Maison Joseph Drouhin has also turned out beautifully in this vintage, as it offers up a pure and classy bouquet of pears, lemon, chalky soil tones, just a touch of Clos des Mouches-like herb tones, spring flowers and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very elegant, with bright acids, excellent focus and lovely length and grip on the quite refined finish. Lovely juice and another stellar value! 2014-2024. **90+.**

2012 Chablis “Réserve de Vaudon”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

I really like the Réserve de Vaudon bottling, year in and year out, and the 2012 is another fine success. The deep, bright and complex nose offers up a blend of lemon, tart orange, flinty soil tones, white flowers, citrus zest and a nice touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, crisp and complex, with fine intensity of flavor, bright acids and very fine length and grip on the wide open and vibrant finish. A lovely *villages*. 2014-2024. **90.**

2012 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2012 Vaillons was bottled a bit later than the two grand crus of Les Clos and Vaudésir that I tasted on this trip (early November versus the end of July for the grand crus), and the wine was still not completely recovered from its *mise* when I tasted it at the end of the month. The nose seems very concentrated this year, offering up notes of apple, orange, a touch of chicken broth, hay and plenty of minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, powerful and has very snappy acids, with very good focus, but a slightly corpulent texture to it at the present time. The finish is certainly very long and this wine may come around nicely, but it could also be one of those powerfully-built 2012s that will demand some bottle age to relax its structural elements. 2017-2030+? **87-90+?**

2012 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2012 Drouhin Vaudon Montmains was bottled at the same time as the Vaillons, but it was in a much better mood for tasting at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep, pure and

utterly classic in its aromatic profile of apple, tangerine, oyster shell, straw and a nice topnote of both citrus zest and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and very well-balanced, with a lovely core of fruit, crisp acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and zesty finish. A fine bottle in the making. 2014-2025+. **90+**.

2012 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2012 Montée de Tonnerre (which was bottled at the end of September) is a very stylish example of the vintage as well, with a forward and very classy personality. The deep and succulent nose offers up an aromatic mélange of lemon, green apple, a lovely base of chalky minerality, spring flowers and lemon zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a good core, fine focus and grip and excellent balance, with ripe fruit, crystal clear soil tones and a good chassis of framing acids giving this wine great charm out of the blocks. Fine juice. 2014-2030. **91-92.**

2012 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2012 Vaudésir from Domaine Drouhin Vaudon is a very pretty wine in the making, wafting from the glass in a nicely ripe and very vibrant blend of lemon, green apple, orange zest, lovely minerality, white flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and nicely transparent, with good acids and focus, very good, but not great mid-palate depth and a very long, complex and ripe finish. This is a very good bottle, but it does not quite have the cut and raciness of the very best Drouhin Chablis in 2012, and perhaps this is a reflection of the bit of rain that fell in the region on the 25th and 26th of September. 2016-2030+. **91-92.**

2012 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

Despite the vineyard of Les Clos being hit hard by the frost in the spring of 2012, the Drouhins’ version has turned out beautifully, as this is a step up in terms of depth and mid-palate intensity than the Vaudésir. The bouquet is deep and classic, wafting from the glass in a mix of lemon, apple, a touch of tangerine, flinty minerality, incipient notes of beeswax, white flowers and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with fine cut and grip, impressive, nascent complexity and a very long, minerally and classic finish. This will be approachable right out of the blocks, but I would hold off on pulling corks on this wine for at least a couple of years and allow its secondary layers of complexity to emerge. Superb juice. 2016-2035. **93-94.**

2012 Meursault- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Meursault *villages* from the Drouhins is very deep and concentrated in style, but it steers clear of the overt musculature of some whites from the Côte de Beaune in this vintage and is really a stellar bottle of AC. The deep and intense nose jumps from the glass in a mix of tangerine, apple, almond, a superb base of soil, a touch of iodine and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy in texture, with a fine core and superb focus, cut and grip on the long and beautifully balanced finish. This is really a very, very strong bottle of Meursault AC this year! 2014-2030+. **91+**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

There is no Clos de la Garenne bottling this year, as the hail made the yields so short that it was all blended into this lovely and fairly concentrated bottle of Puligny *villages*. The bouquet is a ripe blend of peach, orange, chalky soil tones, a bit of nuttiness and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost dense on the attack from the very short yields, with superb cut and grip, plenty of mid-palate concentration and a long, powerful

and palate-staining finish. This is just a touch corpulent today, but if its elegance blossoms with bottle age, then my score will seem unduly conservative. 2014-2030. **90+?**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The last couple of vintages have really found me impressed with the Chassagne AC bottling from Maison Drouhin, and the 2012 is no exception, as this is a lovely wine in the making. This is a bit less concentrated than either the Puligny or the Meursault AC this year, which I find an added benefit to the wine. The deep, pure and very classy nose wafts from the glass in a blend of pear, lemon, tangerine, a touch of butter, salty soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and succulent on the attack, with a fine core and excellent length and grip on the vibrant and focused finish. Lovely juice. 2014-2025+. **91.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2102 Folatières is a good, wide open and tasty example of the vintage, but the wine seems just a bit easy-going out of the blocks and perhaps shows just a touch of backend sunburn. This was not yet bottled at the time of my visit (one of the few Drouhin whites still in tank) and perhaps its different stage of evolution was responsible for my perceptions? In any case, the wine offers up a very lovely nose of apple, peach, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, wide open and succulent at the core, with good length and grip, sound framing acids and just a bit of missing precision making its presence felt on the juicy finish. I like this wine quite well, but like the Puligny *villages* bottling, right now, it seems to not be able to keep pace with the comparable bottlings from the Drouhins from the villages of Chassagne or Meursault. Maybe I just caught it at a bad time? 2014-2022+? **90+?**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” Marquis de Laguiche- Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Laguiche Morgeot is one of the more concentrated examples in the Drouhins’ white Burgundy stable this year, but it manages to retain its customary shapeliness as well and is a very tasty, albeit, more powerfully styled bottle in the making. The bouquet is almost a reduction sauce of lemon, orange, chalky soil tones, incipient butteriness, citrus zest, a dollop of *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and concentrated in the mid-palate, with bright acids, fine focus and grip and a very long, powerful and nascently complex finish. This is definitely not one of the 2012 whites that I would call “too powerful” in style, but it is not quite in the same league as the supremely elegant 2010 version of this lovely cuvée. 2017-2030+. **92.**

2012 Meursault “Perrières”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Meursault “Perrières” from Maison Joseph Drouhin has turned out beautifully, wafting from the glass in a deep and intense nose of apple, pear, chalky minerality, orange zest, almonds and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with crisp acids, excellent focus and grip, superb balance and a very long, vibrant and almost chewy finish. This is quite similar stylistically to the superb Meursault AC this year in the cellars here, but of course, with far more complexity and breed. Fine juice. 2016-2035. **93+.**

2012 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Clos des Mouches was brutalized by hail damage in both 2012 and again in 2013, with the yields in 2012 here between six and eight hectoliters per hectare, depending on where in the vineyard one went. These infinitesimal yields have produced a stunningly beautiful Clos des Mouches blanc this year, which soars from the glass in a complex and very, very pure and intense nose of apple, tangerine, lemon, brilliant minerality, a hint of beeswax, incipient Clos des

Mouches herb tones, orange zest, lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent acidity and focus, superb balance and a very, very long, intensely flavored and vibrant finish. A brilliant young wine! 2016-2035+. **94+**.

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Joseph Drouhin (Estate)

The 2012 Drouhin Corton-Charlemagne from their own estate fruit (the family also purchases fruit on the hill of Corton, but they now make two distinct cuvées of this wine) is absolutely stunning. These vines all lie in the *lieu à dit* of Les Longuettes in Aloxe, right where the hill takes its sharpest bend and heads over in the direction of Pernand (Pougets is the next *climat* over in the direction of Pernand from this parcel) and they have produced a brilliant young wine in 2012. The stunning bouquet is a blend of apple, tangerine, lemon oil, a great base of complex minerality, a touch of *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very pure on the attack and stunningly transparent on the backend, with a rock solid core, great focus and cut and a very, very long, poised and classic finish. Great juice. 2017-2040+. **95**.

2012 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The new addition to the Drouhin portfolio of Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet is as stellar wine in 2012, as it soars from the glass in a glorious aromatic constellation of lemon, pear, tangerine, salty minerality, lemon blossoms, a touch of pastry cream and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and elegant, with a great core of fruit, totally classic shape and balance, vibrant acids and laser-like focus on the very long, complex and utterly refined finish. A beautiful new Drouhin wine and most importantly, one without any prior allocation system, so make sure to pester your merchant to ask the distributors about the availability of this great bottling!. 2016-2035+. **94+**.

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet from the Drouhin family is a brilliant example of the vintage, soaring from the glass in a magical mélange of buttered pears and apples, a touch of almond paste, a very, very complex base of chalky soil tones, spring flowers, lemon zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and juicy on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, with fine underlying minerality, vibrant acid and a very, very long, elegant and nascently complex finish. A great bottle of Bâtard-Montrachet in the making, that is structurally accessible out of the blocks (due to its superb and seamless balance), but which will be even better with a few years of bottle age. 2016-2035+. **95+**.

2012 Montrachet “Marquis de Laguiche”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Marquis de Laguiche Montrachet is one of the more concentrated examples in the Drouhin cellars in 2012, and I am not sure if this wine will ever attain the customary refinement and elegance that defines this great wine in its greatest vintages. This was still in barrel (as was the Criots, Corton Charlie and Clos des Mouches Blanc) at the time of my visit, so perhaps it will show a bit less powerfully once it is bottled. This is not to say that this is a bad wine by any stretch of the imagination, but as I place this wine at the very summit of Montrachet bottlings because I value the inherent elegance of this cuvée, I am less enamored of the more powerful vintages of Laguiche. The bouquet is very, very deep, very pure and very concentrated, offering up a pungent blend of lemon oil, tangerine, a touch of pineapple, very complex, chalky minerality, hints of the pastry cream to come and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very concentrated, but also impeccable balanced and snappy, with lovely focus and grip, nascent complexity and a very, very long, powerful and snappy finish. It will be very,

very interesting to see how this wine unfolds with bottle age, as it could well be one of the greatest vintages of Marquis de Laguiche Montrachet ever produced, or it could always be just a touch too concentrated for its own good. Time will tell. 2018-2040? **92-96?**



Vins Rouges de Maison Drouhin

2012 Laforêt Bourgogne Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Laforêt Bourgogne Rouge from Maison Drouhin has turned out quite nicely, as it offers up a stylish, red fruity nose of cherries, woodsmoke, strawberries, soil tones and a nice touch of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, juicy on the attack and has as nice core, with just a touch of tannin and very good length and grip. Good juice. 2014-2020. **86+**.

2012 Rully Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Rully rouge is a nice wine, but it is a bit rustic out of the blocks in this vintage and cannot really keep pace with the best Drouhin wines in this price range this year. The color is rather remarkably light and the nose is a blend of cherries, quince, bonfires, stony minerality and venison. On the palate the wine is medium-full, chewy and a bit rustic, with a good core and sneaky length and grip on the moderately tannic finish. This was only bottled at the end of October, so perhaps it is more elegant than it is currently showing only two weeks out from its *mise*, and it may well be better than my note suggests. 2017-2030. **87+?**

2012 Côte des Beaune Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Côte des Beaune Rouge from Maison Joseph Drouhin was completely destemmed this year and was assembled in tank at the time of my visit and ready for bottling in early December. The bouquet is bright, deep and quite black fruity this year, offering up scents of black cherries, woodsmoke, French roast, dark soil tones, gamebirds and just a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off fine mid-palate depth, with a pretty chewy personality, good focus and balance and a long, youthful finish. This will need some time in the cellar to blossom, but it will be very good. 2018-2035. **88+**.

2012 Chorey-les-Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Chorey-les-Beaune from Maison Joseph Drouhin has turned out beautifully and is once again, one of the great bargains of the vintage. The deep, pure and vibrant nose jumps from the glass in a mix of cherries, pomegranate, complex soil tones, a nice touch of woodsmoke and a topnote of fresh herbs redolent of thyme and mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely transparency, fine focus and balance, a nice touch of backend tannin and impressive length and grip on the nascently complex finish. A lovely example. 2015-2030+. **89+**.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Clos des Godeaux”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Clos des Godeaux was still in tank at the time of my first Drouhin tasting on this trip on November 14th, and the wine is structurally one of the tougher examples from the Côte de Beaune. The complex bouquet is quite lovely, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, orange peel, gamebirds, coffee, stony soil tones and woodsmoke in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and nicely transparent, but with some chewy backend tannins giving an overall impression of a wine that is quite clenched today and hidden behind its considerable structure. It will be interesting to see how this wine eventually comes around, as I have always liked it in the past and there is certainly an awful lot of impressive complexity on the nose already. 2018-2035. **87-89+?**

2012 Beaune “Grèves”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhins lost fully fifty percent of their production in Beaune “Grèves” this year, as these vines are right up at the top of the vineyard in the Sur le Grèves section and their twenty-five to thirty year-old vines suffered from poor flowering and hail. The wine has turned out very nicely despite the struggles during the growing season, as it offers up a stylish bouquet of red and black cherries, cocoa, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke, gamebirds, dark soil tones and just a whisper of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely structured, with a good core, ripe tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. The wine this year seems to lack just a touch of brightness (perhaps from the hail stress to the vines?), but otherwise, is a very stylish example of the vintage. 2019-2040. **90**.

2012 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

With the combination of hail damage and poor flowering, the Clos des Mouches was down fully sixty-eight percent in crop size from a “normal” vintage, and the wine was completely destemmed this year. This was still in cask on the 14th, offering up a deep and black fruity nose of black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, incipient notes of gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite vibrant on the attack, with a good core of fruit, ripe, chewy tannins and fine length and grip on the focused and very well-balanced finish. This looks likely to turn out quite similarly to the 1993 in terms of its more black fruity profile, and given all of the depredations in this vineyard in 2012, this is a stellar success! 2020-2050. **91+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Chambolle AC this year *chez* Drouhin is made entirely from purchased fruit, with the exception of the production of the family's small parcel of vines in Veroilles. The wine was racked into tank in preparation for bottling at the time of my visit and offered up a pretty nose of cherries, strawberries, coffee, lovely soil tones and a topnote of roasted gamebird. On the palate the wine is medium-full, soft and nicely soil-driven, with gentle acids, modest tannins and a long, complex and easy-going finish. Perhaps this was just assembled and the wine is a bit more structured than it was showing at the time of my visit, but it really seems a touch soft-centered and unstructured in comparison to some of the other Drouhin village wines this year. 2014-2024+? **87-88+?**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Gevrey *villages* was also in tank and ready for bottling, and as it too seemed just a touch less vibrant than normal, I have to assume that it was not on its best form. Twenty to thirty percent of this cuvée is now comprised of de-classified premier crus, and I have really liked this bottling since the 2005 vintage, so I assume that the 2012 is even better than it was showing on the 14th of November. The bouquet on this sample was deep and complex, but not as bright as the wines that were completely on form, as it offers up scents of red and black cherries, chocolate, a nice touch of soil, nutskins, woodsmoke and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, suave on the attack and shows off a nice, sappy core, with very good soil inflection, fine-grained, moderate tannins and lovely length and grip on the complex and fairly low acid finish. If this brightens up after bottling, my score will seem ridiculously conservative, as there are a lot of fine elements here! 2014-2030+. **88-89+?**

2012 Morey St. Denis “Clos Sorbé”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family has been producing Clos Sorbé since the 1962 vintage- all from the same source- but, it is only in recent years that I have gotten my act together and asked to taste this wine every year! The 2012 is stellar and one of the wines that should be on everyone's radar who fears they may not get their usual, favorite Drouhin bottlings in this very short vintage. The bouquet is deep, complex and very classy, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, red plums, cocoa, gamebirds, mustard seed and a lovely and quite complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, succulent on the attack and sappy at the core, with gorgeous transparency, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex finish. A classic example of this fine *terroir*. 2018-2045+. **93.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cazetiers”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The new addition of Cazetiers from Maison Drouhin was still in barrel at the time of the November 14th tasting and was showing very nice potential. The bouquet is deep, complex and quite classic in its black fruity mélange of cassis, black cherries, espresso, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, incipient notes of grilled meat and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with a good core, fairly low acids, ripe tannins and excellent focus and balance on the long, complex and quite succulent finish. This is good juice in the making and I have to believe that this bottling is only going to get better in the coming years, as the family sinks its teeth into the viticultural side of the equation with these vines! 2019-2040. **91.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The new parcel of Lavaux St. Jacques is going to be a fine addition to the Drouhin lineup, but even though there was no issues with hail here in 2012, the production was off fifty percent because of the poor flowering and there are only four *pièces* of Lavaux this year, where there

will be eight in a normal year. The wine had only been bottled two weeks before our tasting on the 14th, and despite showing very well at the time, there is a distinct possibility that I am underrating this a bit! The wine is deep, vibrant and very, very promising on the nose, offering up a blend of black cherries, dark berries, mustard seed, black minerality, espresso and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great signature of soil, bright acids ripe, velvety tannins and a very long, complex and elegant finish. Fine, fine juice and another new Drouhin bottling to make sure to ask your merchant to try and secure an allocation of this year! 2020-2050. **92+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Les Procès”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Nuits St. Georges “Les Procès” had been bottled two weeks before our tasting on the 14th, but was showing very well indeed. The bouquet is deep, pure and very elegant in its mélange of black cherries, cassis, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke, gamebirds and bitter chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very refined on the attack, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature, fairly low acids and a long, focused and ripely tannic finish. Good juice in the making- as usual for this underrated and very elegant Nuits premier cru! 2020-2050. **92+**.

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2102 Chambolle “Premier Cru” was already assembled in tank on the 14th and ready for imminent bottling, and as it was showing quite structured and fairly reserved in personality, I wonder if this wine had been racked fairly recently into tank. The bouquet clearly shows that this will be a very pretty wine with some bottle age, as it offers up scents of black cherries, French roast, woodsmoke, herb tones, a bit of game, coffee and a gentle base of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good core, ripe, well-integrated tannins, fine focus and very good length and grip on the still quite primary finish. This is another 2012 Drouhin red that very much recalls the 1993 version of this cuvée in its early days. 2019-2040. **90+?**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The les Baudes 2012 was still in barrel in mid-November, but was showing a bit of edginess that was not typical of the lineup *chez* Drouhin, and I wonder if the malo was later here than with most of the wines in the cellar? The bouquet is a blend of black cherries, dark plums, woodsmoke, herbs, a bit of charred wood, hints of chicory and incipient gamebirds. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, concentrated and quite smoky in personality this year, with a good core, firm, slightly raw tannins and a bit of backend pepperiness showing on the long and grumpy finish. 2020-2050. **88-91+?**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Petits Monts 2012 was still in barrel in mid-November and showing lovely potential. Once again, I was immediately struck by the similarity of this wine to the young 1993 version. The bouquet is deep, pure and very black fruity in its mélange of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a bit of duck, incipient notes of fresh nutmeg and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and potentially very velvety, with a sappy core of black fruit, striking soil signature, very suave tannins and a long, focused and nascently complex finish. A beautiful and supremely elegant wine in the making. 2020-2050. **94+**.

2012 Clos de Vougeot- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Drouhin Clos de Vougeot has been bottled two week prior to our tasting on the 14th, but was showing beautifully and this is clearly a great vintage for this consistently excellent wine. The beautiful bouquet soars from the glass in a youthful aromatic constellation of black

cherries, dark berries, espresso, a lovely base of soil, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very refined on the attack, with a sappy core, superb soil signature, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the pure and youthfully complex finish. Given that this was just bottled, I would expect my score to creep up a point or two once the wine has really recovered from the *mise*. Great juice. 2025-2075. **93-94+**.



2012 Echézeaux- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Echézeaux from the Drouhins was still in cask and had not yet been racked once, so I assume that this is another wine where the malo was on the late side. The wine was pretty grumpy on November 14th, showing rather clenched behind its structural elements and very reluctantly offering up a bouquet of cassis, dark berries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, incipient notes of venison, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and focused on the attack, with a good core, fine soil drive and very good length and grip on the firmly tannic and well-balanced finish. I am sure this is going to be better than it was showing at the time of our tasting, as it was clearly not in a good mood to be tasted! 2022-2055+? **90-92+?**

2012 Griotte-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Griotte was still in cask and showing beautifully on the 14th, soaring from the glass in a classic blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meat, a fine base of soil tones, a touch of dark chocolate, fresh herbs and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with a sappy core, superb transparency, ripe

tannins and excellent length and grip on the perfectly focused and very classy finish. I particularly like the way the intensity in this wine builds on the finish this year! 2022-2060. **95.**

2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Clos de Bèze had been bottled at the end of October, but was still showing very well in mid-November, wafting from the glass in a superb aromatic constellation of black cherries, cassis, espresso, black minerality, grilled meats, mustard seed, woodsmoke and a lovely base of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with beautiful transparency, a sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and balance and a very, very long, poised and nascently complex finish. Given that this was just bottled, I would expect it to place at the upper end of the range when it has fully recovered. Great juice in the making. 2025-2075. **94-95+.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Les Amoureuses is certainly on a hot streak of publicity in the last couple of years, as I seem to be served this after grand crus with great frequency at cellars where both are available these days, and this was the case at our November 14th tasting, where the Amoureuses went after Echézeaux, Clos de Vougeot, Griotte-Chambertin and Clos de Bèze! In any event, the 2012 Drouhin Amoureuses (which was still in cask) had no difficulties shining at its selected spot in the lineup, as the wine offers up a superb bouquet of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, dark chocolate, a beautifully complex base of soil, gamebirds, mustard seed and a dollop of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and plush on the attack, with a sappy core, beautiful soil signature, suave tannins and a very long, focused and youthfully beautiful finish. Gorgeous juice. 2022-2055. **95.**

2012 Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2012 Musigny *chez* Drouhin had been bottled on the last day of October, so I can only imagine just how good this wine is going to be once it fully bounces back from its *mise*! The superb bouquet is a blend of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, incipient notes of gamebird, woodsmoke, a lovely potpourri of spices and a stylish framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and superb structured, with a sappy core, fine-grained tannins, great transparency down to its magical soil tones, good acids and a nice sense of reserve on the very, very long and seamless finish. 2025-2075. **95-98.**

Maison Louis Jadot (Beaune)

I only made a single visit to Maison Jadot this year, rather than my customary two stops, as it was a short crop for many of their cuvées and it seemed logical to not ask to work through the entire range of 2012s with yields so small. As Technical Director Frédéric Barnier had intimated on the last stop to taste 2011s last year that the scale of my past tastings when Jacques Lardière was still the Cellar Master here were a bit too demanding in terms of time for his schedule, I was very content this year to just allow Monsieur Barnier to determine which wines he would like to show from the 2012 vintage. The breadth of selections was not a whole lot smaller than it had been in the past, but it was fun to taste a few cuvées this year that I would not normally have tasted in the past. Monsieur Barnier was one of the few vigneron in all of the Côte d'Or who commented that he intended to give his red wines from 2012 a longer élevage than normal, as he strongly felt that the wines would benefit from more time in barrel prior to bottling. Many of the other vignerons who I spoke with on this subject were of the opinion that they would bottle the wines on the earlier side- if the temperatures in the cellars cooperated- as

they were at a very nice point in their evolutions and they did not want to risk losing any of the beautiful fruit tones that the red wines were showing at this stage of their evolutions. It will be interesting to see how the 2012 Louis Jadot reds evolve with their longer and slower élevage in barrel, but as the cellars here are quite cold, it may well be that the wines will simply reach a similar stage of evolution down the road to what was evident in many cellars this past November.

In any case, Frédéric Barnier has continued the tradition at Maison Jadot of taking over the winemaking duties here in a challenging vintage- in much the same manner as Jacques Lardière did all the way back in the 1971 vintage- as hail was a challenge in the Côte de Beaune in 1971 and (as we have discussed in depth previously) it was once again a very real sore spot in so many top sites in the Côte de Beaune in the 2012 vintage. I observed that Monsieur Barnier has used a touch less new wood for several of his wines in 2012 than Monsieur Lardière might have used, and as I am always a fan of less new wood, I was very happy to hear this. For example, almost all of the premier cru reds (with a few exceptions) were raised this year at Maison Jadot in one-third new wood, one-third one wine barrels and one-third two wine barrels. The entire cellar had been racked once during mid-summer, but with some malolactics on the reds finishing up later than others, not all of the red wines were in a similar stage of evolution at the end of November. As far as the white wines go at Maison Jadot in 2012, Monsieur Barnier decided to block malos for a number of the wines to keep the acids bright, and with a few of these wines, they seemed at the time of my visit to have sacrificed a bit of personality and terroir to the methodology. Of course, I have had this impression in past vintages at Maison Jadot as well, only to find that the wines, six to ten years down the road, had aged very well indeed and my initial reservations did not seem quite as well-founded as they had seemed early on. I fully understand the logic of preferring to partially block malos to acidulating the must, but in this day and age of premature oxidation for white wines, it might just be preferable to consider leaving the acidities natural (even if they are a bit low) and maximize the soil signature of the wine right out of the blocks, as so many white Burgundies in this day and age collapse from the scourge of premox before they have had a chance to properly mature in any case- no matter how well maintained their acidities are out of the blocks. This is not a criticism of Monsieur Barnier's decision to partially block the malo in some of his white wines in 2012, but simply an observation that these days wines that drink a bit sooner are not the same crime they were a generation ago! Some of the top end Jadot whites this year were cut from the very concentrated cloth of the vintage, and like others of their ilk, I am not really sure of how they are going to evolve.

Vins Blancs du Maison Jadot

2012 Santenay “Clos de Malte” Blanc- Maison Louis Jadot

This is a pretty concentrated 2012 white, offering up a powerful nose of pear, orange, pastry cream, white soils and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very succulent on the attack, with good focus and a long, crisp and slightly forceful finish. This has the malo partially blocked to keep it fresh and this has worked very well. Good juice for the near-term in a bigger-boned style. 2014-2020. 86+.

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Clos des Guettes” Blanc- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos des Guettes Blanc is a far more elegant rendition of the vintage than the Clos de Malte Blanc, as it offers up a pure and complex nose of apple, pear, *crème patissière*,

orange zest, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, again with a quite a powerful personality for this wine, but with good cut and focus to keep it relatively light on its feet on the long and snappy finish. The more powerful style of the vintage sits more comfortably on the shoulders of the Clos des Guettes this year. 2016-2030+. **90+**.

2012 Pernand-Vergelesses “Croix de Pierre” Blanc- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Croix de Pierre Blanc is again, quite a concentrated style of wine this year, offering up a deep and powerful nose of peach, pear, a dollop of pastry cream, orange peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite assertive, with a rather four-square personality, sound acids and a long, crisp and wide open finish. This is not forbiddingly powerful in style, but it is ultimately a bit chunky and simple in its broad-shouldered way. 2014-2024. **87**.

2012 Beaune “Grèves” Blanc- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Beaune “Grèves” Blanc from Maison Jadot has turned out quite well and will offer up early drinking appeal. The bouquet is very pretty in its blend of pear, apple, almond paste, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows off good mid-palate depth, with tangy acids, fine focus and very good length and grip on the bright and pure finish. This will drink well right out of the blocks, but I would give it a year or two in the cellar to allow some secondary layers of complexity to emerge. 2015-2025+. **90**.

2012 Meursault “Charmes”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Meursault “Charmes” is a very pretty wine, but it seems just a touch one-dimensional from what I assume is its partially-blocked malo this year. The bouquet is a stylish blend of apple, pear, almonds, orange zest, pretty minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very racy, with an almost tensile palate feel from its malic acids, very good focus and grip and fine depth at the core. The finish is long and very primary, and it will be interesting to see how much complexity emerges in this wine with bottle age. It is certainly very good, and if it develops plenty of secondary complexity then it will be outstanding and my score will seem unduly conservative. 2015-2030+. **91+?**

2012 Meursault “Genevrières”- Maison Louis Jadot

The domaine’s parcel in Genevrières was the first plot of vines picked in 2012 and the wine has turned out beautifully. The deep, complex and very classy nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, tangerine, chalky minerality, spring flowers, a touch of iodine and a nice base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and beautifully balanced, with a fine core of fruit, excellent focus and grip and a very long, racy and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2016-2035+. **93+**.

2012 Meursault “Perrières”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Maison Jadot Perrières is another absolutely stellar example of the vintage, soaring from the glass in a beautiful blend of apple, pear, passion fruit, chalky minerality, hazelnuts, gentle notes of iodine and a stylish framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very complex, with outstanding mid-palate depth, bright acids and exceptional length and grip on the laser-like and very pure finish. A classic in the making. 2018-2040. **94+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” l’Abbaye de Morgeot - Maison Louis Jadot

The domaine’s version of Morgeot has turned out very well indeed, with a properly reserved aromatic profile of apple, peach, orange peel, lovely soil tones, a touch of nutskin and new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock

solid core of fruit, crisp, perfectly integrated acids and impressive length and grip on the young and classic finish. This will be very good in four or five years' time. 2017-2035. **91+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet "Morgeot" Duc de Magenta- Maison Louis Jadot

The Duc de Magenta version of Morgeot is quite a bit different stylistically than the domaine's own version, which I suppose makes sense, as they are not in the same *lieu à dit*, but this also seems to show more of a blocked malo character. The bouquet is deep and more elegant out of the blocks than the domaine version, but perhaps also a bit less complex in its mélange of pear, apple, pastry cream, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very suave and almost silky on the attack, with a good core, crisp acids and a long, pure and modestly complex finish. This is more slick and open than the above, and quite well done in its style, but I would prefer to wait for the domaine's version to mature than drink this one out of the blocks- despite the fact that the overall differences in their quality are very small! 2015-2035. **91**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet "Caillerets- Maison Louis Jadot

Again, the 2012 Jadot Caillerets seems just a touch simple right now from a partially blocked malolactic fermentation, but perhaps more complexity will emerge with bottle age. The bouquet is certainly deep and pure in its blend of pear, tangerine, white flowers, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and a bit more complex than the Duc de Magenta Morgeot, with lovely focus and balance, good acids and fine length and grip on the bright and bouncy finish. This is a very, very tasty bottle of wine, but it does not seem to possess quite the same soul as the top two Meursault premier crus this year. 2016-2035. **92**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet "Referts"- Domaine Louis Jadot

The 2012 Jadot Referts again seems a bit monolithic from its partial malo blockage, but the elements it does present are very, very pretty and stylish. The bouquet is a mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite four-square for a Puligny premier cru, with a good core and bright acids, but a slightly heavy-handed personality. Perhaps the vintage just produced a heavier style of wine here and any lift the wine could get from the retention of malic acid was a positive. But, this is one of the weaker premier crus at Maison Jadot this year. 2014-2025. **88**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet "Folatières"- Domaine Louis Jadot

The 2012 Folatières also shows a blocked malo personality, but here the wine is far more interesting and light on its feet than the Referts. The bouquet is a blend of delicious apples, pears, chalky soil tones, white flowers, *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and correct, with a good core, snappy acids and very good focus and grip on the moderately complex finish. A very pretty wine in its style. 2016-2035. **92**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet "Clos de la Garenne" Duc de Magenta- Louis Jadot

The 2012 Duc de Magenta Clos de la Garenne is a very powerful example of the vintage, but the power is pretty well-handled and the wine has turned out quite well in its more dense and broad-shouldered style. The bouquet is a pretty and very deep mix of apple, almond, tangerine, chalky soil tones, incipient notes of butter and a nice base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, wide open and powerful, with sound framing acids and good complexity and length on the well-balanced, concentrated finish. This pushes the envelope a bit in terms of power, but never crosses the line, and I am sure that there are tasters out there that will love its larger than life personality. Me? I respect it style more than I love it. 2014-2025. **92**.

2012 Corton-Charlemagne- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Corton Charlie from Maison Jadot was not singing at the time of my visit, but perhaps this was just a bad moment to be tasting it. The nose is again showing a fair bit of blocked malo character in its aromatic mélange of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, pastry cream and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nascently complex, but seems a touch phenolic on the backend right now, with notes of orange peel sticking out on the long, crisp and palate-staining finish. The acids here are good and the wine is nicely focused, so perhaps it was just a bit grumpy on the day of my visit. 2020-2050. **92+?**

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet was also not really singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet is a ripe and very stylish blend of orange, pear, deep soil tones, gentle smokiness, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite concentrated in style, with a rock solid core, crisp acids, but only moderate length and a bit of backend, phenolic bitterness poking through on the finish. Not a great showing. 2020-2050? **91+?**

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet “les Demoiselles”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 les Demoiselles also seems a bit dense and concentrated this year. The nose is fresh, due in part to a partial blockage of malo, as it offers up scents of pear, apple, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, orange peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and reasonably complex, with a dense core, crisp acids and a long, youthful and rather blunt finish. This is not showing anywhere near its customary elegance out of the blocks, but perhaps, this too is just in a difficult phase for tasting? 2020-2050+? **90-93+?**

2012 Montrachet- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Montrachet from Maison Jadot is also a rather powerful example of the vintage, but this seems more primary than stifling in style, as it offers up a very fine bouquet of apple, peach, tangerine, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and quite four-square out of the blocks, with fine mid-palate depth, crisp acids and a very, very long, primary and concentrated finish. I would bet on this wine coming around with some bottle age, as the constituent components seem well-aligned, but this will be one of those 2012 white Burgundies that does not offer up much enjoyment until it has had a chance to blossom a bit from behind its power. 2020-2050? **92-94.**

Vins Rouges du Maison Jadot

2012 Santenay “En Gatsulard”- Maison Louis Jadot

En Gatsulard is a village wine *lieu à dit* in Santenay located up at the very top of the slope, and the Jadot parcel of vines is forty years of age. This wine is showing a nice and quite spicy nose of red and black cherries, venison, bonfire, deep soil tones and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite concentrated at the core, with good focus, a fair bit of chewy tannin and a long, structured finish. Good, solid juice in the making. 2018-2035. **87+.**

2012 Pernand-Vergelesses “Croix de Pierre”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Croix de Pierre was also showing good potential at the time of my November visit, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, red currants, woodsmoke, stony soil tones, coffee and roasted game. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and moderately tannic, with a good core, a bit of rusticity to the texture of the tannins (at least today), but with good length and grip on the still fairly youthful finish. This will need a few years to blossom, but it should prove to be quite good. 2018-2035. **87+.**

2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune “la Dominode”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 la Dominode was one of the later wines in the cellar to finish up its malolactic fermentation in this vintage, with the wine only finishing in mid-summer and the wine was racked for the first time at the end of June. The wine was still showing a bit clenched at the time of my visit, offering up a black fruity nose of dark berries, black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebirds, some balsamic tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very chewy, with a good core of fruit, nice minerality, but a dry edge to the tannins that suggest a bit of sunburn. This is still very early on in its evolution, and though the wine is showing a bit cuspy today, that may well simply be a stage of its evolution. 2020-2040+? **85-89+?**

2012 Monthelie “les Champs Fulliot”- Maison Louis Jadot

Champs Fulliot, not surprisingly, as it lies immediately next door to Volnay “Clos des Chênes”, was hammered by hail in 2012, and Maison Jadot has only produced three barrels this year (out of a normal crop of nine to ten *pièces*) and the wine was not entirely on form at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, gamebirds, cocoa, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a good core of fruit, but again, it is really showing a rather dry edge to its structure at the present time, with the tannins firm and slightly hard on the long and focused finish. I am not wild about how this wine is showing structurally right now, but perhaps a longer *elevage* will help soften this wine up a bit more. It is really hard to get a confident read on the wine right now. 2018-2040+? **83-88?**

2012 Beaune “Cras”- Maison Louis Jadot

The Beaune “Cras” is a new addition to the Jadot vineyard patrimony, as the house purchased the vineyards from the Germain family this year. Cras is a one of the best premier crus in the village and the 2012 from Maison Jadot is going to be a lovely wine, as it shows lovely poise and balance. The bouquet is deep and complex, wafting from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a touch of fruitcake, coffee, a fine base of soil tones, fresh herbs and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely focused, with a sappy core of fruit, and excellent signature of soil, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2020-2050. **91+**.

2012 Beaune “Clos des Couchereaux”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos des Couchereaux is another absolutely stellar example of the vintage in the making, with even a bit more sappiness and purity than the fine Cras bottling. The bouquet is vibrant and beautifully focused, offering up a mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebirds, a complex base of dark soil tones, a nice touch of violet and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant on the attack, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This will be a classic vintage of Clos des Couchereaux. 2020-2050+. **92+**.

2012 Beaune “Boucherottes”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Boucherottes is also a very good bottle in the making, with a bit more mid-palate stuffing than the Cras, but not quite the same inherent elegance as is found in the Clos des Couchereaux. The bouquet is a lovely blend of dark berries, black cherries, incipient notes of venison, dark soil tones, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite broad-shouldered for a young Beaune, with a very good core of fruit, ripe tannins and very good length and grip on the youthful finish. Good juice in the making, but this will take some time to blossom. 2020-2045+. **91+**.

2012 Beaune “Clos des Ursules”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos des Ursules is another superb bottle in the making, with the depth and purity of the vintage very much in evidence in its superb bouquet of cassis, black cherries, a touch of plumminess, a very complex base of soil tones, cocoa and a gentle base of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows superb mid-palate depth, with a fine chassis of ripe, well-integrated tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, nascently complex finish. Fine juice. 2023-2060. **93+**.

2012 Volnay “Clos de la Barre”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos de la Barre is excellent on the nose, but it was showing a very slight touch of dry-edged tannins on the palate. This could just be a stage of the wine’s evolution, or it may be the result of the hail here during the summer of ’12. The bouquet is really impressive in its purity and class, as it delivers scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, espresso, a touch of graphite, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a good core, tangy acids and a slightly edgy aspect to the tannins on the long and soil-driven finish. This should resolve nicely, but will demand a good decade to allow its tannins to fall away. 2022-2045+. **91**.

2012 Pommard “Clos de la Commaraine”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos de la Commaraine was not showing any signs of dryness in its structural elements, just the properly reserved and ripely tannic profile of a high-quality young Pommard. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a superb and youthful blend of red and black cherries, venison, coffee, incipient *sous bois*, bonfires, fresh herb tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and nicely focused, with a fine core of fruit, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the primary and very promising finish. Good juice in the making. 2023-2060. **92**.

2012 Corton “Pougets”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Corton “Pougets” was showing rather tough and hard-edged at the time of my visit, and I hope more time in barrel will round it off a bit, as it really seemed on the cusp a bit in terms of balance. The bouquet is quite fine, offering up scents of red and black cherries, red currants, bonfires, cocoa, gamebirds and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a lovely, stony aspect to its personality, with a sappy core of fruit, fine focus and grip and a very long, chewy and slightly dry finish. Everything, other than the slightly dry tannins here, is exemplary, and if this is just a passing phase in the wine’s evolution, then this is going to be a stellar vintage of Pougets. But, the way the wine was showing in November, it may also be that this wine never loses that dry edge to its tannins. 2025-2065+? **83-92+?**

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières”- Maison Louis Jadot

Maison Jadot’s 2012 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” has turned out very well indeed, offering up a deep and pure bouquet of red and black cherries, coffee, grilled venison, herb tones, a fine base of soil and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the young and very promising finish. This will be a very, very good bottle in a decade. 2022-2060. **91+**.

2012 Nuits St. Georges “Vaucrains”- Maison Louis Jadot

As promising as the 2012 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” is in the Jadot cellars this year, the Vaucrains will be an impressive step up in quality! The exceptional nose jumps from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, cocoa, woodsmoke, gamebirds, a touch of

balsam bough, a very, very complex base of soil and a deft framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully sappy at the core, with a lovely signature of soil, ripe, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and balance on the very, very long, pure and primary finish. High class juice! 2025-2075. **93+**.

2012 Vosne-Romanée “les Suchots”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Maison Jadot Suchots is absolutely stellar and will be one of the great premier crus to emerge from the domaine’s cellars this year. The gorgeous bouquet delivers an utterly classic blend of cassis, sweet dark berries, coffee bean, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebirds and a nice touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully complex, with a sappy core of black fruit, superb transparency, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the very, very long and primary finish. A great bottle of Suchots. 2022-2060. **94.**

2012 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Maison Louis Jadot

There is only a single barrel of Malconsorts in the cellars this year, which was raised in a one wine barrel. This too is stellar, with a far more red fruity profile to its bouquet of cherries, raspberries, coffee, duck, Vosne spices, a beautifully complex base of soil tones and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with stunning transparency, a sappy core of fruit, superb focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, refined and tangy finish. Quintessential Malconsorts! 2022-2055. **94.**

2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” from Maison Louis Jadot is excellent, wafting from the glass in an aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, red plums, a touch of violet, gamebirds, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and gentle new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows excellent mid-palate depth, with suave, elegant tannins, lovely sappiness and a very long, soil-driven and elegant finish. This is young, but it will be all silk and perfume at its apogee. 20122-2050+. **92.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Estournelles St. Jacques”- Maison Louis Jadot

The domaine’s 2012 Estournelles St. Jacques is excellent and very red fruity in personality this year, delivering a deep and very complex nose of cherries, red plums, a touch of blood orange, grilled meats, coffee, a fine base of soil, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in profile, with excellent soil inflection, an excellent core of fruit, fine focus and balance, ripe, chewy tannins and a very, very long classy and transparent finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2022-2055+. **93.**

2012 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos St. Jacques from Maison Jadot was quite closed at the time of my November visit, but it is clearly going to be a superb example of the vintage. The bouquet is a fine and reserved blend of red and black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, venison and a nice base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still very primary, with nascent complexity, a fine core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and impressive length and grip on the primary finish. This will be excellent, but give it time. 2025-2065+. **94.**

2012 Echézeaux- Maison Louis Jadot

The Echézeaux is from vines owned by Domaine Gagey, and there are only two barrels this year of this lovely wine. The bouquet is a superb mix of black cherries, dark berries, game, dark soil tones, a bit of bonfire, coffee, fresh herb tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nascently complex, with a superb, sappy core of fruit, great soil

drive, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the pure and youthfully complex finish. A dynamite bottle of Echézeaux in the making! 2025-2065+. **94.**

2012 Grands Echézeaux- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Grands Echézeaux is more red fruity and a bit meatier than the Echézeaux this year, as it offers up a complex nose of cherries, quince, grilled venison, coffee, bonfires, nutskins, a touch of fresh nutmeg and cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and impressively mineral in profile, with a good core, suave, chewy tannins and a very long, transparent and still quite primary finish. This too is excellent, but at this early stage, it looks like the 2012 Echézeaux might just edge this wine out in the long run with better precision and elegance. But, this will be splitting hairs and either wine will be a superb addition to the cellar. 2022-2055. **93.**

2012 Clos St. Denis- Maison Louis Jadot

The Clos St. Denis is also from Domaine Gagey and the wine is very fine in 2012, wafting from the glass in a deep and class nose of cherries, red plums, coffee, a beautiful base of soil, exotic spice tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and focused, with its spicy new wood component not quite integrated at this moment, but with a fine core of fruit, lovely minerality and a long, suavely-tannic and very transparent finish. I assume that the new wood will seamlessly integrate with more aging (there is only one new barrel here out of three) and the wine should be outstanding with a decade's worth of bottle age. 2022-2060. **93+.**

2012 Clos de la Roche- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Jadot Clos de la Roche is another very good bottle in the making, with a deep and complex nose of red and black cherries, dark chocolate woodsmoke, venison, a good base of soil tones and a stylish base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good core and soil signature, firm, ripe tannins and fine balance and grip on the long, ripely tannic and chewy finish. This is not quite as vibrant as the very best wines in the cellars this year, but it has admirable depth and lovely soil drive on the backend. 2025-2075. **93.**

2012 Clos Vougeot- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Clos Vougeot was showing excellent potential at the time of my visit, with a bouquet of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebirds, a complex base of soil, fresh herb tones and a nice framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with nascent complexity, ripe, well-integrated tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long, primary and soil-driven finish. This will be an excellent bottle of Clos Vougeot in a dozen years or so. 2025-2075. **93+.**

2012 Bonnes-Mares- Maison Louis Jadot

Maison Jadot has produced a stellar young bottle of Bonnes-Mares in 2012. The wine offers up a superb and very youthful bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, gamebirds, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite powerful in its structure, with a rock solid core of fruit, firm, well-integrated tannins, plenty of sappiness and a very, very long, chewy and quite masculine finish. This is a classic, old school bottle of Bonnes-Mares in the best sense of the term! 2025-2075. **94+.**

2012 Chapelle-Chambertin- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Maison Jadot Chapelle-Chambertin is also outstanding, wafting from the glass in a deep, pure and primary aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, cocoa, gamebirds, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and refined on the attack, with a great core of fruit, ripe, suave tannins and

impressive nascent complexity on the very, very long, poised and very promising finish. A great vintage of Jadot Chapelle! 2022-2060+. **94+**.

2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Maison Louis Jadot

The 2012 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” from Louis Jadot is another superb bottle in the making, delivering a deep, pure and primary bouquet of red and black cherries, red plums, dark soil tones, grilled meat, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with plenty of structure, a superb core of fruit, strong soil inflection, ripe tannins and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced and still very, very young finish. 2025-2075. **95**.



Frédéric and Michel Lafarge in their cuverie- weathering the storm of a capricious nature in 2012 and 2013.

Volnay

Domaine Michel Lafarge (Volnay)

I tasted the 2012s with Monsieur Michel Lafarge on this visit, as Frédéric needed to attend to preparing a shipment of 2011s for a transport that was to pick them up early on the same afternoon of my appointment. Michel Lafarge had a lot to say about the 2012 and 2013 vintages, as the second crop here is going to be every bit as short as the tiny yields the family has had to endure in 2012. As Monsieur Lafarge noted, in his long career, he has “never seen two years as challenging as 2012 and 2013, as the last vintage with such difficult growing conditions was 1984, but at least that year did not have such tiny yields.” The Lafarge family lost fully

eighty percent of its crop in 2012, as all of the bad luck of the vintage hit them with a vengeance. To give just some idea of how brutal 2012 was to the Lafarges in terms of yields, there is no Pommard “Pézerolles” at all this year, as the very tiny amount of grapes that survived the hail and brutal flowering ended up blended into the Bourgogne rouge to try and stretch that cuvée just a touch more. The two fine Lafarge premier crus in Beaune- les Aigrots and Grèves- they were blended together to make a viable-sized cuvée. The Volnay villages and the Vendanges Selectionées bottlings were also combined to try and make a cuvée that could be more easily vinified and raised in the cellars. There are no Côte de Beaune Villages or Volnay “Premier Cru” bottlings as well in 2012. The vast majority of casks in the cellar this year do not contain any wine! For folks who have visited the domaine previously, the entire red wine production of all the family’s plots fits in the tiny backroom cellar that usually only contains one or two premier crus from Volnay and the Pézerolles! And the white wine production is no better- there will only be single bottlings of Meursault and Aligoté in 2012, rather than the customary two of each. As Michel Lafarge said, “that is nature, but at least the quality of the wines that are here in 2012 is very, very good.” I observed to Monsieur Lafarge that with the quality this good, he should at least bottle a few magnums for the family to keep in their library for the long haul, but he quickly noted that “there will be no magnums made in 2012, as there simply is not enough wine and every bottle is going to be precious in this vintage.” I have a very strong feeling that the Lafarges are not going to be keeping many bottles at all of the 2012s for the family cellar, as they are going to do their best to try and get bottles to all of their loyal clients, despite having so very little wine in this year. But, as Monsieur Lafarge did note, at least the wines that are here are absolutely stellar examples of the vintage!

Vins Blancs de Domaine Lafarge

2012 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Bourgogne Aligoté from Domaine Lafarge is very lovely this year, offering up a bright and juicy nose of apple, tangerine, stony soil tones, citrus peel and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and very pure, with a fine core of fruit, fine acids and lovely cut and focus on the long and classy finish. Fine juice. 2014-2020+. **88.**

2012 Meursault- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Meursault AC from the Lafarge family is really a very vibrant, complex and elegant example of the vintage. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of tangerine, sweet grapefruit, pear, very complex minerality, orange zest and again, a nice touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and utterly classic in profile, with zesty acids, great focus and balance and a very long, complex and racy finish. This is really a beautiful bottle of Meursault. 2015-2030+. **91+.**

2012 Beaune “les Aigrots” Blanc- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 les Aigrots Blanc is superb, as the wine offers up a fine aromatic mélange of apple, pear, a touch of passion fruit, chalky minerality, orange zest, apple blossoms and a very, very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant in profile, with a superb core of fruit, outstanding focus, crisp acids and great length and grip on the very refined, precise and complex finish. Just a beautiful bottle of Beaune blanc! 2015-2035. **93.**

Vins Rouges de Domaine Lafarge

2012 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Exception”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Exception is a lovely wine that really shows off the elegance of the vintage in its red fruity nose of cherries, strawberries, coffee, vinesmoke and a complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and soil-driven, with just a whisper of tannin, good acids and very nice length and grip on the round and wide open finish. 2014-2020. **87.**

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge is very red fruity in personality this year- perhaps the small addition of Pommard “Pézerolles” heightens this perception in the wine. The bouquet is really very elegant in its mélange of cherries, *fraises du bois*, a touch of cocoa and a very complex base of soil tones (particularly for its level). On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and very pure on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, just a bit of well-integrated tannin on the backend, good acids and very good length and grip. This is always one of the best Bourgogne *rouge* bottlings in the entire Côte d’Or, but the 2012 is extra special. 2016-2030+. **89.**

2012 Volnay- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The blended Volnay AC in 2012 is going to be a very beautiful village wine, as it offers up a very pure and complex bouquet of cherries, red plums, a touch of nutskin, a very complex and classy base of soil, gamebirds, cocoa powder and a nice floral topnote redolent of peonies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise, with a suave attack, a fine core, superb soil signature and a very long, tangy and suavely-tannic finish. Extremely classy juice! 2019-2040.

2012 Beaune “Premier Cru”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Both Michel and Frédéric Lafarge commented that they would have never imagined blending the production from the premier crus of les Aigrots and Grèves together, as the two *terroirs* are remarkably different, but having to do so in 2012, they were both pleasantly surprised at how well the two wines worked together and how complete and complex the resulting Premier Cru bottling has turned out. This is really a stunning example of the vintage, offering up a deep and very sappy nose of red and black cherries, red plums, a very complex base of soil tones, gamebirds, woodsmoke and a pungent topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and utterly seamless, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the youthful and elegant finish. Great juice! 2020-2050. **93+.**

2012 Volnay “Mitans”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

I have never tasted a finer young vintage of Mitans in the Lafarge cellars than this great 2012 version. Often this *terroir* is quite black fruity in personality when young, but there is a cornucopia of red fruit on display in this wine as well in this vintage. The very perfumed and complex nose wafts from the glass in a blend of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa, gamebirds, a beautifully elegant base of soil tones and again, a distinct topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and detailed on the attack, with a beautifully sappy core, stunning transparency and a very, very long, refined and suavely-tannic finish. A great bottle of Volnay in the making. 2020-2060. **94.**

2012 Volnay “Clos du Château des Ducs”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Clos du Château des Ducs is also very, very red fruity this year and it too is simply gorgeous. The great nose wafts from the glass in a perfumed mélange of red plums, cherries, just a hint of dark plum, quail, woodsmoke, a magically complex signature of soil and a touch of nutskin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and

absolutely rock solid in the mid-palate, with ripe, well-integrated tannins, beautiful focus and nascent complexity and superb grip and focus on the very, very long and promising finish. This will need a good decade to really reach its apogee, but it is destined to be a great, great vintage of Clos du Château des Ducs. 2022-2060+. **94+**.

2012 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Caillerets from Domaine Lafarge is a bit chewier and more typical in texture of the vast majority of Côte de Beaune reds in this vintage, but it shares the same stunning purity and nascent complexity on the nose and palate of all the other wines in the cellar this year. The bouquet is excellent, delivering a lovely blend of cherries, pomegranate, cocoa, stony soil tones, woodsmoke, incipient notes of venison and a topnote of peonies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, very, very pure on the attack, with a great core of fruit, outstanding transparency, firm, chewy tannins and a very long, tangy and youthful finish. This will be a terrific wine, but it will need closer to a dozen years in the cellar to blossom. It should prove to be a very, very long-lived bottle of Volnay. 2025-2075. **94+**.

2012 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2012 Clos des Chênes *chez* Lafarge is another superb wine in the making. The bouquet here is a bit more reserved than most of the premier crus in the cellar, but is very, very deep and transparent in its red fruity aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, a touch of blood orange, cocoa, nutskin, gamebird, violets and a kaleidoscopic base of minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and quite tightly-knit, with a rock solid core of sappy fruit, great length and grip, ripe tannins and a very, very long, transparent and youthful finish. This will be a great Clos des Chênes. 2025-2075. **95+**.

Meursault

Domaine François et Antoine Jobard (Meursault)

Given the staggering hail damage in 2012 in Meursault, I really did not expect to see any of my favorite producers in this village on my November trip, as I just expected most estates to have no interest in seeing journalists with so little wine left after the brutal summer of 2012 here. Much to my surprise, Antoine Jobard was happy to receive me and show me a truly stunning range of 2012s- albeit in tiny quantities. I cannot really emphasize strongly enough just how difficult it was in Meursault in this vintage, as I asked Monsieur Jobard how much worse the production was in 2012 versus the very short crop of 2010 and he replied “we are down anywhere from twenty to one hundred percent- depending on the vineyard- from our low yields of 2010.” The only good news here is the remaining wines are absolutely brilliant and about as beautiful a set of wines as I have ever tasted from Domaine Jobard, and given that I rank this estate right up in my top five or six white Burgundy producers from anywhere, that is pretty high praise for this gorgeous range of wines. I found none of the meta-concentration here that is found in some Côte de Beaune whites in 2012, just magically pure, deep and crunchy white Burgundies of stunning balance and transparency. The family also has a new wine in their lineup in this vintage, a fine premier cru bottling of St. Aubin from the vineyard of “Sur le Sentier du Clou”, which lies mid-slope in the band of premier crus that start up behind the village center with Derrière Chez Edouard and extend towards the border with Puligny. In a typical vintage there should be five barrels of this fine newcomer to the Jobard lineup, but in 2012, there are only two barrels of this exciting new cuvée for the family. The Jobards purchased this quarter hectare parcel of twenty-one year-old vines in 2012 and this is going to earn fans very, very quickly and is just superb in its inaugural vintage. In fact, there is not one wine in the range of

2012 Jobards that I would not want in my cellar in serious quantity if the possibility existed, and do not overlook even the superb Bourgogne blanc this year if that is all that is offered to you from your Jobard merchant, as every single wine that will emerge from 2012 chez Jobard is about as beautiful an example of its respective appellation as one could dream of finding.

2012 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Domaine Jobard Bourgogne blanc is really a delicious wine of breed and finesse that is very much a creature of this great vintage. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, hazelnuts, tangerine and a fine base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost silky on the attack, with a fine core of fruit, crisp acids, lovely focus and impressive length and grip on the classy finish. This will drink beautifully upon release and has the balance to age very gracefully. 2014-2020+. **88.**

2012 Meursault “En La Barre”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 En La Barre from the Jobard family is a stellar bottle of Meursault, with premier cru quality very much in evidence in its complex bouquet and its fine depth and balance on the palate. The wine offers up a classy aromatic constellation of apple, passion fruit, iodine, hazelnuts, a beautiful base of minerality and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off superb mid-palate depth, with bright framing acids, gorgeous fruit tones and soil transparency and outstanding length and grip on the complex and crunchy finish. This is a beautiful bottle. 2014-2025+. **91+.**

2012 Meursault “Tillets”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Tillets *chez* Jobard is also a very, very refined example of the vintage, with lovely depth and purity. The supremely elegant bouquet offers up scents of tangerine, apple, orange blossoms, chalky minerality and just a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a lovely core, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long, concentrated and very well-balanced finish. This is not quite as forward as the En La Barre 2012, but it is every bit as good and is not going to need much time in the bottle to fully blossom. Another stellar wine. 2015-2025+. **91+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Trezin”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Domaine Jobard Puligny “Trezin” is another very forward and poised example of the vintage, and though it does not seem (at least at this stage) to have quite the same inherent complexity as the two Meursault *lieux à dits* served ahead of it, it shares the same purity and elegant depth. The lovely nose is a pretty and wide open blend of apple, peach, white flowers, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite succulent on the attack, with a very good core of pure fruit, bright acids and very good length and grip on the focused and very-Puligny finish. This is a lovely village wine for drinking over the next decade or so and would be a great find on a restaurant wine list in the coming years. 2014-2025. **90+.**

2012 St. Aubin “Sur le Sentier du Clou”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The first vintage of Sur le Sentier du Clou from Antoine Jobard is absolutely stellar and is a must purchase for fans of this estate- if you are lucky enough to cross paths with a few bottles! The superb nose is a blend of apple, pear, spring flowers, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, lovely, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved in profile, with a lovely core, excellent focus and balance and a long, crisp and nascently complex finish. A fine, fine bottle of premier cru. 2015-2030+. **92.**

2012 Meursault “Blagny”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Meursault Blagny” is extremely elegant this year- not always the case with young Blagny mind- and is a superb bottle in the making. The wine offers up a lovely aromatic mélange of tangerine, apple, a hint of iodine, almonds, lovely floral notes, deep soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and displays outstanding mid-palate depth, with great backend soil signature, crisp acids and lovely focus and grip on the very long and classic finish. A superb example of Meursault “Blagny”. 2016-2035+. **93.**

2012 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Poruzots *chez* Jobard is absolutely stellar. The wine is impressively detailed and complex on the nose, wafting from the glass in a very refined blend of apple, passion fruit, hazelnuts, iodine, a gorgeously complex base of soil, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and more reserved in profile than the nose suggests, with a rock solid core, bright acids, superb focus and balance and a very, very long and exquisite finish. I love this wine this year. 2018-2040. **94+.**

2012 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Meursault “Genevrières” from the Jobards is utterly classic and a stunning bottle in the making. The magical nose delivers a complex and very refined mix of tangerine, apple, passion fruit, chalky soil tones (that will turn salty with bottle age), orange blossoms, almond paste and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off gorgeous intensity of flavor, with crisp acids, laser-like focus and brilliant length and grip on the elegant, complex and utterly seamless finish. The backend energy on this wine is just magical! A stunning wine. 2019-2040+. **95+.**

2012 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Charmes from Domaine Jobard is another absolutely beautiful wine, but unless I have misread it a bit, the wine will never quite be able to deliver quite the same effortless depth and complexity of the Poruzots or Genevrières in this vintage. This is not to say that this beautiful bottle of 2012 Charmes is disappointing, but only to emphasize just how beautiful those other two wines have turned out *chez* Jobard in this vintage. The 2012 Charmes offers up a pure and quite stunning bouquet of apple, pear, passion fruit, beautiful, chalky soil tones, apple blossoms and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit more closed out of the blocks than the Genevrières, with a lovely core, crisp acids and fine focus and grip on the long and very pure finish. A superb example. 2017-2035. **93+.**

2012 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2012 Perrières from the Jobard family is lovely- though as was the case last year, there is only a single barrel of this wine made from purchased must. The bouquet is very classy in its mélange of apple, pear, tangerine, almonds, superb minerality, iodine and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and supremely elegant on the attack, with a fine core of fruit and stunning backend cut and mineral drive, with bright acids and outstanding focus and grip on the very, very long finish. This is a gorgeous wine. 2019-2040. **94+.**

Domaine des Comtes Lafon (Meursault)

My visit with Dominique Lafon was only my second stop of my November trip, and I was still quite shocked by the very short crop of 2012 when stepping down in the cellars here. As the trip went on, I became more accustomed to seeing such empty cellars, but these first few visits were really almost uncomfortable to make, given how little wine the most-affected domaines have in the cellars. For example, there are normally twenty barrels of Monthélie “les Duresses”

here in a normal crop, but in 2012 there are only seven casks. The Clos des Chênes news is even worse, as this received the full brunt of the hail damage, as Dominique Lafon only has three hundred and fifty liters of this wine- which he figures he will bottle solely in magnums this year! The Champans was less devastated, so there are four barrels of this (out of a normal nine) in 2012 and the Santenots du Milieu is down by about two-thirds! Just brutal. The story in the Mâconnais is not a whole lot better, as the yields here were down fully fifty percent as well from a combination of bad flowering and hail damage as well. And for the white wines in Meursault? More of the same, with the Clos de la Barre off by fifty percent and comparable numbers also found for the other premier crus. Overall, it was a very thin population of barrels in the Lafon family's cellars in 2012, but at least what was left behind by a capricious Mother Nature was of absolutely stunning quality. I was particularly impressed with the textural sophistication of the tannins of Dominique's red wines this year, as the silky tannins found across the board the Comtes Lafon red wines this year was extremely rare in the Côte de Beaune in 2012.

Mâconnais Wines

2012 Milly-Lamartine- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The 2012 Milly-Lamartine is a very lovely bottle that really shows the depth and concentration from the very short yields of this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of orange, peach, a lovely base of soil, a nice touch of citrus zest and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and quite open out of the blocks, with lovely purity, fine framing acids and very good length on the finish. Good juice. 2014-2020. **89+.**

2012 Mâcon-Uchizy “les Maranches”- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The 2012 les Maranches was also showing beautifully at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a deep, pure and classy nose of apple, peach, a bit of *Mâcon* toastiness, lovely soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and plump on the attack, with lovely focus and bounce, a fine core, crisp acids and excellent length and grip on the light on its feet finish. A very fine bottle in the making. 2014-2020. **91.**

2012 Mâcon-Bussière “la Monsard”- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The la Monsard bottling from Bussière has also turned out beautifully in 2012, as the wine offers up a deep and bright bouquet of peach, apples, a potpourri of spring flowers, a fine base of chalky soil tones and a nice topnote of nuttiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent on the attack, with an excellent core, fine framing acids and impressive length and grip on the complex and classy finish. This is really a fine, fine bottle of Mâcon. 2014-2022. **91+.**

2012 Mâcon-Chardonnay “Clos de la Crochette”- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The 2012 Lafon Clos de la Crochette is very floral this year, wafting from the glass in a bright and classy mix of peach, apple, gentle leesiness, citrus zest and a wonderfully deep and complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks, with a rock solid core of fruit, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and vibrant finish. Lovely juice. 2014-2022. **91+.**

2012 Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine “Clos du Four”- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The 2012 Clos du Four is very fine, as it beautifully synthesizes the depth and intensity of this *terroir* with the inherent elegance of the vintage. The bouquet is deep and very classy, offering up scents of apple, peach, tangerine, a fine, complex base of soil and a vibrant topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with excellent mid-palate concentration, superb focus and balance, bright acids and excellent backend energy

on the long and complex finish. A fine vintage for this consistently excellent wine. 2014-2025. **92+**.

2012 Mâcon Viré-Clessé- Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon

The 2012 Viré-Clessé from Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon is also an outstanding success, offering up a pure and very classy nose of pear, apple, citrus blossoms, a beautiful base of minerality and a hint of almonds in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, suave and full-bodied, with lovely elegance and a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks. The wine is not quite as deep at the core this year as the Clos du Four, but every bit as intense and complex, with bright acids, fine balance and lovely length and grip on the youthfully complex finish. Good juice. 2013-2025. **92+**.



Dominique Lafon in his vines.

Côte de Beaune Rouges

2012 Monthélie “les Duresses” Rouge- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 les Duresses is going to be a very, very fine example of the vintage and I only wish that there was more of the wine to go around. The deep and very sappy nose wafts from the glass in a lovely mélange of cassis, black cherries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, incipient notes of gamebird and a lovely, complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and velvety on the attack, with a lovely core, moderate, very suave tannins and

outstanding length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. I really love this wine this year, as it exudes all of the elegance and sappy purity of the very best 2012s. 2018-2040. **90+**.

2012 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

There is less than a barrel and a half of the domaine’s Clos des Chênes in 2012, which is just a tiny quantity to vinify, but the wine has turned out very well and for those lucky enough to come across a magnum or two of this wine, it will be well worth adding to the cellar. The very fine bouquet is a blend of cassis, dark berries, currant leaf, gamebirds, espresso and a smoky topnote redolent of bonfires. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with fine mid-palate concentration, lovely focus and structure, refined tannins and very fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045+. **92.**

2012 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

As there is decidedly more Champans *chez* Lafon in 2012, the vinification was no doubt much easier in this very short vintage, and the wine is really an utterly classic example. The deep, elegant and very sappy nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black cherries, cassis, incipient notes of gamebird, woodsmoke, currant leaf and a marvelously complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core, outstanding soil drive, fine-grained, almost velvety tannins and beautiful length and grip on the very special finish. This is an outstanding wine in the making. 2020-2050. **93.**

2012 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Comtes Lafon Santenots du Milieu is another great wine in the making, with stunning depth and elegance tied to the depth and concentration of the vintage. The supremely elegant nose is still quite primary in its mélange of dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, a marvelously complex base of dark soil tones, currant leaf and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a sappy core of fruit, outstanding focus and grip, velvety tannins, stunning transparency and a very, very long, impeccably balanced finish. A beautiful vintage for this wine. 2020-2050. **94+**.

Côte de Beaune Blancs

2012 Meursault- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

I have always liked the inherent elegance that the Lafon Meursault AC consistently delivers from year to year, but with the new vineyard additions to this bottling from the former Domaine Manuel holdings, the quality here has even jumped up a bit. The 2012 is a stellar village wine, wafting from the glass in a very classy blend of apple, passion fruit, a touch of iodine, orange zest, chalky minerality and a gentle topnote of fresh coconut. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, impressive cut and grip, excellent focus and a very long, suave and succulent finish. This wine will drink beautifully from day one, but is so well balanced that it should cruise along for many, many years to come. 2014-2030+. **91.**

2012 Meursault “Clos de la Barre”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Clos de la Barre is going to be an outstanding example of the vintage, as it offers up a deep, pure and vibrant bouquet of apple, pear, almonds, complex, chalky minerality, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a silky sense to its structure, a lovely core, superb transparency and a very long, pure and perfectly balanced finish. This shows all of the elegance of the vintage. 2015-2035. **92.**

2012 Meursault “Désirée”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

In 2012, Dominique Lafon has decided he will bottle the Meursault “Désirée” on its own for the first time in several years (the parcel was replanted in 2007), as these young vines have only produced twenty hectoliters per hectare in this very short crop, with Mother Nature taking care to rein in the typically prolific nature of young vines. The Désirée has not been bottled on its own since the 2005 vintage, as the production here since 2007 has been blended into the Meursault *villages* bottling, but it will have no problem standing on its own in 2012. The very stylish nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a nice dollop of iodine, almonds, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and shows a lovely core of fruit, with excellent cut and grip, bright acids and fine focus on the very long, complex and classy finish. Lovely juice. 2014-2025. **91+**.

2012 Meursault “Bouchères”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Meursault “Bouchères” from Domaine des Comtes Lafon is really a lovely wine, with all of the inherent elegance of the vintage shining through on both the nose and palate. The very refined bouquet delivers a mélange of apple, pear, hazelnut, a beautiful base of soil tones, iodine and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with excellent mid-palate depth, bright acids and really lovely cut and grip on the bright, focused and very classy finish. This will become a wonderfully buttery, transparent bottle of Meursault with a few years bottle age. 2015-2035. **92+**.

2012 Meursault “La Goutte d’Or”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Goutte d’Or is a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the very suave Bouchères, but it too is inherently elegant and is going to be a beautiful bottle of wine with a few years in the cellar. The deep, complex and vibrant nose wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, clementines, fresh almonds, a beautifully refined base of chalky soil tones, a hint of butter, citrus oil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved, with a lovely core of fruit, superb soil signature, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the poised and succulent finish. A supremely elegant vintage of Goutte d’Or. 2016-2035. **92+**.

2012 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The second vintage of Dominique Lafon’s Poruzots is absolutely stellar, though there are nowhere near the normal fifteen barrels of this wine in the cellar in 2012. The bouquet is deep, pure and absolutely stunning, as it delivers a superb aromatic mélange of apple, pear, tangerine, iodine, hazelnuts, a beautifully complex base of minerality and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very elegant on the attack, with a rock solid core, a properly reserved personality, bright acids, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long and classy finish. A beautiful wine. 2016-2040. **94**.

2012 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Meursault “Genevrières” from Domaine Lafon is a supremely elegant, complex and silky example of the vintage that will delight fans of the estate. The gorgeous nose jumps from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, hazelnuts, salty, chalky minerality, spring flowers, incipient notes of the butter to come, a touch of coconut and a fine framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with great focus and nascent complexity, laser-like focus and stunning length and grip on the perfectly balanced and very, very refined finish. Just a gorgeous vintage of this wine! 2016-2040. **94+**.

2012 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Charmes *chez* Lafon is also outstanding, delivering a pure and focused aromatic constellation of apples, tangerines, complex, chalky minerality, hazelnuts, citrus zest, vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very

precise on the attack, with lovely mid-palate depth, crisp acids, outstanding focus and balance, vibrant acids and great cut and grip on the very, very long, pure and soil-driven finish. Great juice. 2015-2040. **94.**

2012 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2012 Meursault “Perrières” from Dominique Lafon is another absolutely stellar example of the vintage, offering up a pure and classic nose of apples, pears, orange zest, almonds, a kaleidoscopic base of minerality, spring flowers, iodine and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant on the attack, with a rock solid core, laser-like focus and enormous backend energy on the focused, seamless and simply stunning long finish. A great vintage for this iconic bottling. 2016-2045. **96+.**

2012 Montrachet- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Production in the Lafon parcel of Montrachet was down by forty percent in 2012, which, given the really brutal yields in some of the other vineyards in this vintage, is really not as bad as it could have been! The remaining seventy-five case of this wine are going to be the stuff of legends for many years to come, as the wine is absolutely brilliant. The stunning bouquet is a beautiful blend of white peach, apple, tangerine, incipient notes of almond paste, iodine, a marvelously complex base of chalky soil tones, white flowers and a very discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, impeccable focus and balance, crisp acids and superb cut and grip on the very, very long and utterly refined finish. A brilliant and utterly classic young bottle of Monty. 2020-2050+. **98.**

Auxey-Duresses

Domaine Gilles Lafouge (Auxey-Duresses)

My very first visit of this trip in November was to Gilles Lafouge, and though I was prepared for very short yields in 2012, the sight of the family’s cellars with so few barrels in them was still quite shocking. The domaine received the full brunt of the vintage’s wrath, with hail as devastating in Auxey-Duresses as in neighboring Meursault and Volnay, and in fact, Monsieur Lafouge noted “that the storm of the 4th and 5th of August actually hit Auxey a bit harder than in Meursault.” However, as there is a valley in Auxey-Duresses, with important vineyards on both sides, it was on the side of Auxey-Duresses that borders with Meursault that received most of the hail damage, and the yields on the other side of the valley were only decreased by the problems with the flowering and at least did not have the added weight of the severe hail damage as well. Overall, Domaine Lafouge’s crop in 2012 was down by about a third, and happily, in the following summer of 2013, the hail in the Côte de Beaune missed Auxey-Duresses. Gilles Lafouge noted that he had six or seven people hovering over his vibrating sorting table as the grapes came in from the vineyards in 2012, and the domaine sorted very carefully to keep out any sunburnt grapes or anything that was less than optimally ripe. Overall, the red wines chez Lafouge in 2012 are very typical of the best of the Côte de Beaune-deep, concentrated and quite structured wines, with fine depth of fruit and soil signatures, and with plenty of chewy tannin that will require some patience. There are some gentle notes that are leafy and/or herbaceous in some of the Lafouge reds right now, but I suspect that just had to do with the timing of my visit, as almost everything in the cellar was already assembled into tank in preparation for bottling early in the spring. The white wines are quite classic and lovely here, with plump and pure fruit, good acid levels and excellent cut and grip on their long and focused

finishes. Most of them are so beautifully balanced that they will make lovely drinking right out of the blocks, but these are also white wines that will age very well indeed.

Vins Blancs

2021 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

This was the first time I had tasted the domaine's Aligoté bottling, which is produced from fifty year-old vines planted in the valley of Auxey, with a westerly exposition. This is really a deep and lovely wine in 2012 (further underscoring that in this vintage, one can find outstanding wines way down the food chain!), offering up scents of apple, a touch of honeycomb, a really lovely base of soil and a bit of Meursault nuttiness that is very attractive. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and long, with fine focus, good acids and outstanding length and grip on the impressively complex finish. Good juice. 2014-2020. **88.**

2012 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Hautés"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Hautés" from Domaine Lafouge is really a lovely village wine, offering up a very pure and classic nose of tart orange, apple, chalky soil tones, a gentle touch of leesiness, citrus peel and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and long, with fine focus, a fairly forward personality and very good length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. Classy AC. 2014-2025. **89+.**

2012 Auxey-Duresses Blanc "les Boutonniers"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

As readers may recall, this beautifully-situated vineyard lies right next door to "Meix Chavaux" on the Meursault border, and it has turned out very well indeed in 2012. The wine is extremely floral on the nose this year, offering up scents of intense lemon and lime blossoms, apple, fresh almond, a lovely base of limestone soil and a nice dollop of sweet grapefruit that augurs very well for its future development. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and shows off excellent concentration at the core, with fine focus and grip and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. Good juice! 2014-2025+. **90+.**

2012 Meursault- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Meursault *villages* was also showing lovely potential at the time of my visit, wafting from the glass in a classy aromatic constellation of apple, clementine, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied complex and rock solid at the core, with fine framing acids, a succulent attack and impressive length and grip on the long and focused finish. There was just a touch more leesiness here than in the Auxey whites, but I assume this is simply a reflection of its *assemblage* at the end of September and this characteristic will fade as the wine fully has a chance to settle over the winter. A lovely wine in the making. 2014-2025. **90+.**

2012 Meursault "Meix Chavaux"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Meix Chavaux from Gilles Lafouge is a superb wine in the making, offering up a bright and zesty bouquet of apple, pear, lime blossoms, a complex base of chalky minerality, almonds and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully delineated, with a rock solid core, racy acids and great backend mineral drive on the focused and very snappy finish. A truly classic bottle of Meix Chavaux in the making. 2015-2030. **92+.**

2012 Meursault "Casse Tête"- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Monsieur Lafouge noted that there was less hail damage in Casse Tête than was the case in Meix Chavaux or in his Auxey vineyards in 2012, and the wine has turned out very well indeed and there will happily be just a bit more of this to go around than with some of the other cuvées. This is a really refined and elegant bottle of young Meursault, offering up scents of

apple, pear, hints of buttered almonds, a complex base of soil, apple blossoms, vanillin oak and gentle notes of iodine in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, excellent focus and balance, nascent complexity and lovely length and grip on the very classy finish. I really, really like the style and shape of this classy wine. 2015-2030+. **93+**.

Vins Rouges

2012 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Lafouge Auxey AC was down thirty-five percent in yields in this vintage, but the vineyards that go into the *villages* were not really hit by hail, but suffered mostly from *coulure* and *millerandage* during the flowering. This is a very pretty wine on both the nose and palate, offering up scents of red and black cherries, gamebirds, coffee, lovely soil tones and a gently smoky topnote reminiscent of bonfires in the distance. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core, moderate, well-measured tannins and good length and grip on the focused finish. This wine was showing a tad less energy than many in the cellar, but it had only recently been racked into tank from the barrels and I am sure this is only the stage that the wine was in at the time of my visit. 2015-2030+. **87-89**.

2012 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “Climat du Valle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Climat du Valle was more on form than the Auxey *villages* and showed its true personality on both the nose and palate when I was here in early November. The bouquet is deep, bright and black fruity this year, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, gamebird, lovely, chalky minerality and a topnote of fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and well-balanced, with a fine core of dark fruit, a fine signature of soil, moderate tannins and very good length and grip on the still quite primary finish. This will be a lovely wine, but give it at least a handful of years in the cellar to blossom. 2017-2035+. **90**.

2012 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “les Duresses”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 les Duresses from the Lafouge family is really a wine of superb depth and nascent complexity, but it is going to be a pretty difficult bottle to find in the market, as yields here were down fully forty percent from normal. The bouquet offers up an impressive aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, currant leaf, espresso, dark soil tones, fresh thyme, woodsmoke and a gentle base of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, quite black fruity in personality this year, with lovely focus, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the still quite primary finish. 2018-2040. **92**.

2012 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “la Chapelle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 la Chapelle from Domaine Lafouge is also a lovely example of the vintage, with quite a bit more red fruit showing here than in the les Duresses. The superb nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of red and black cherries, plums, cocoa, currant leaf, a superb base of soil, woodsmoke and fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and quite sappy at the core, with lovely length and grip, fine focus and a tangy, ripely tannic finish. This is high class juice. 2019-2040. **92+**.

2012 Pommard “les Chanlins”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2012 Chanlins is the most red fruity wine in the Lafouge cellars this year and this is going to be a lovely bottle in the fullness of time. The deep and pure nose delivers a lovely blend of cherry, quince, a touch of blood orange, a lovely base of minerality, gamebirds, a bit of nutskin and a nice dollop of fresh herbs in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely structured, with a sappy core of red fruit, lovely transparency, suave

tannins and a very long, tangy, well-balanced and nascently complex finish. This is going to be a lovely bottle of Pommard. 2020-2050. **93.**



Spring starting to push the sap in the vineyards of Puligny-Montrachet.

Puligny-Montrachet

Domaine Jacques Carillon (Puligny-Montrachet)

Jacques Carillon lost fully fifty percent of his crop in 2012- in comparison to a “normal” year- but, he likes the quality and the style of the vintage quite well, despite the very short yields. That said, he ranks “the 2102 vintage as slightly inferior to 2011, with just a bit less minerality and a rounder and richer personality” than the previous year. Monsieur Carillon began harvesting on September 17th in 2012, and the wines had all been racked and assembled in tank at the time of my visit. However, everything was showing very well indeed and it is quite clear that Monsieur Carillon has made a stellar range of 2012s. We tasted through his entire lineup of 2011s after the 2012s, which served very well to show just how beautifully the 2011s have turned out chez Carillon and it is pretty hard not to agree that the lovely expression of minerality in the range of 2011s gives them a slight nod over the more succulently fruity versions of each cru found in the 2012 vintage. But, both vintages are outstanding and there was not a wine amongst the entire range of the two vintages that I would not be delighted to have in my own cellar. I arrived here right after my tasting at Domaine Sauzet, and I cannot think of a recent morning of tasting where I have had the pleasure to taste so many brilliant young white Burgundies in such

a short span! Jacques Carillon is very clearly at the top of his game today and making some of the most beautiful white wines to be found anywhere in Burgundy!

2012 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2012 Puligny *villages* from Domaine Carillon is excellent, as it jumps from the glass in a bright and classy blend of apple, white peach, lemon blossoms, chalky soil tones and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully balanced, with fine focus and grip, zesty acids and lovely balance on the long, seamless and very classy finish. This wine will offer superb drinking right out of the blocks, but has the balance to age as long and gracefully as the specter of premoix will allow. Village wines do not get much better than this! 2014-2030. **91.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Macherelles”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The Domaine Carillon Macherelles was replanted in 2003 and was bottled as *villages* from 2005 through the 2008 vintage, but has been labeled with its proper premier cru name since the 2009 vintage. The 2012 has really turned out well, with the low yields of the vintage producing lovely depth in the bouquet of apple, orange, a potpourri of floral tones, fine soil nuances and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a lovely core, very bright acids, fine focus and a very long finish that closes with a lovely note of orange oil. Fine juice. 2015-2030. **90+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Canet”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2012 Champs Canet from Monsieur Carillon is really lovely and very, very floral in this vintage, wafting from the glass in a classy blend of lemon blossoms, tangerine, delicious apple, a fine base of chalky soil and a nice dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, round and elegant, with a fine core, lovely focus and grip, bright acids and excellent purity and balance on the long and elegant finish. This will drink very, very well with only a couple of years of bottle age and is going to be very tasty. 2015-2035. **92.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières” - Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières” from Domaine Jacques Carillon is a deep, complex and utterly classic rendition of this fine bottling. The classy bouquet delivers a blend of white peach, orange, complex minerality, a touch of orange oil and a discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a crunchy texture from the low yields, vibrant acids, excellent focus and a very long, reserved and snappy finish. A beautiful wine in the making, but this will need more time in the cellar than the Champs Canet to really come into its own. 2017-2040. **93+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2012 Referts from Monsieur Carillon is also a stellar wine in the making, soaring from the glass in a superb mélange of apple, tangerine, lemon, complex minerality, lemon blossoms and a nice base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, racy and defined by its minerality, with a full-bodied format, rock solid core, snappy acids and simply exceptional focus and grip on the very, very long, perfectly balanced and racy finish. This is a stunning young bottle of Referts. 2018-2040. **94.**

2012 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

Year in and year out, I love Monsieur Carillon’s Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet, and the 2012 vintage has produced another absolutely stellar version. The gorgeous nose delivers a blend of lemon, clementine, apple, hints of the *crème patissière* to come, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, a dollop of orange oil, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep,

full-bodied, pure and beautifully elegant, with a superb core, laser-like focus, great grip and nascent complexity and a very, very long, refined and racy finish. A brilliant wine in the making. 2018-2040. 96+.

Domaine Jean Chartron (Puligny-Montrachet)

I caught the Domaine Chartron wines at a very bad moment in their élevage during my November trip, as the entire cellar of premier crus had just been assembled into tank and had their sulfurs adjusted. The lower level wines had not yet recovered from their bottling, and the grand crus were still in cask, but again, had recently been racked and were not in a really good mood to be tasted either. I tasted through the entire range here in November, but upon reflection, I really did not see any of the wines at a moment that I would call representative, and so I will plan to revisit Jean-Michel Chartron in March and retaste the wines when they are in a proper phase for evaluation. It just does not seem fair or professional of me to try and handicap these wines when they were at such a disadvantage in the cellars.

Domaine Leflaive (Puligny-Montrachet)

The yields at Domaine Leflaive in 2012 were half what they were in 2011, as the domaine averaged only twenty-three hectoliters per hectare in this vintage. That is microscopic for chardonnay, and yet, the 2012s here at Domaine Leflaive are emphatically not cut in the super-concentrated style that is found at some Côte de Beaune addresses in this vintage, but are wines of absolutely breathtaking purity, transparency and unparalleled elegance. They are probably the greatest young set of wines I have ever had the pleasure to taste at the estate, and I could fill a small book listing all of the magical young wines I have had the pleasure to taste at this iconic Puligny property. I had the pleasure of tasting with Cellar Master Éric Remy during my visit, who has fashioned some of the greatest wines in the history of Domaine Leflaive during his career here. It seems ironic that only two vintages ago, when tasting the supernal 2010s chez Leflaive, I was hypothesizing that I was tasting the most beautiful wines I had ever crossed paths with from the domaine, and now I find a vintage that seems likely to land even a touch higher on the ultimate quality chart with a bit of bottle age. Perhaps the 2010s and 2012s will keep each other company in the years to come at the pinnacle of Puligny-Montrachet potentiality and there will be no reason to choose a favorite amongst these two legendary years of Domaine Leflaive wines, but if I were forced to select only one, I might well yield to temptation and choose the 2012s as my favorites here. Time will tell, but there is little doubt that the domaine has produced some utterly brilliant wines in this great vintage. Given how short the crop is in 2012, Domaine Leflaive is planning on releasing some wines out of its library to long-time clients to try and make up a bit for the dramatic shortfall in quantity with the 2012 vintage. At the time of my visit, it was thought that some 2008s would accompany 2012 allocations for the United Kingdom market, while 2009s would be earmarked for the market here in the states, as I guess that more buxom vintage is more along the lines of the perceived preferences of “la Gôûte Americaine”. As I noted in the introduction, the path of hail damage in Puligny-Montrachet was more difficult on the Blagny side of the village (happily not hitting the grand crus with anywhere near the ferocity as was the case in the premier crus on the northern end of the commune), so the yields vary pretty dramatically depending on which premier cru one is talking about amongst the domaine’s holdings. For instance, Monsieur Remy estimates that fully thirty-five percent of the crop was lost to hail damage alone in Clavoillon (this is after the potential yields were already decimated during the poor weather at flowering) and fully sixty-five percent of a normal crop

was lost in 2012 here. The domaine's parcel in Folatières was equally battered, but things were a touch better in Combettes and Pucelles this year. Domaine Leflaive began harvesting on September the 14th of 2012, and given the short nature of the remaining crop out on the vines, it did not take too many days to bring in all the grapes. I did not have the opportunity to taste the domaine's lovely Mâcon-Verzé on this visit from the 2012 vintage, but did have a chance to try their superb new Charmes-Chambertin bottling (made from purchased grapes) from the 2011 vintage and strongly recommend keeping an eye out for this lovely bottle in the market. As Monsieur Remy noted while we were tasting this beautiful wine, "not too bad for a white wine domaine!"

2012 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Domaine Leflaive Bourgogne Blanc really shows beautiful precision in its aromatic constellation of lemon, apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and lemon zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very complex for its level, with a fine core, the great elegance of the vintage very much on display, with fine cut and inner structural tension adding zip and brightness on the long and classy finish. Fine juice. 2014-2025. **90+**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Puligny *villages* from the estate is quite tightly-knit and pure out of the blocks, with a lovely synthesis of totally beguiling fruit tones and great minerality. The outstanding bouquet delivers a blend of apple, a touch of tangerine, beautifully complex minerality, a touch of beeswax, citrus zest, apple blossoms and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with stunning transparency (particularly for a village level Puligny), a fine core, excellent focus and grip and a very long, snappy and relatively youthful finish. I would give this beautiful bottle of Puligny AC a few years in the cellar to allow it to really blossom. 2016-2040. **92**.

2012 Meursault "Sous la d'Ane"- Domaine Leflaive

Domaine Leflaive's vines for this Meursault bottling were planted in 1995 and 2004, with fully eighty percent of the surface planted in that latter year, so this remains still very much a young vine cuvée. However, as I noted in the introduction to the vintage, younger vines benefited from the short yields of the vintage and this wine shows really quite lovely focus and detail as a result. The bouquet is a very stylish mélange of apple, lemon zest, a touch of iodine, chalky soil tones, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent, with very good mid-palate depth (though not quite the match of the Puligny AC this year), with zesty acids, excellent focus and grip, impressive transparency and lovely backend energy on the long and very well-balanced finish. A lovely result. 2015-2035. **91+**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet "Clavoillon"- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Clavoillon from Domaine Leflaive is a beautiful wine in the making and it is really a pity that there will be so little of it to go around. The very precise and mineral nose jumps from the glass in a mix of apple, white peach, lemon, wonderfully complex, chalky minerality, citrus zest, white flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and pure, with a very lovely core of fruit, excellent soil inflection, crisp acids and laser-like focus on the very long and classy finish. A gorgeous wine in the making. 2017-2040. **93**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet "Folatières"- Domaine Leflaive

The elegance of the 2012 vintage is very much in evidence in this superb young Folatières. The utterly refined bouquet is a complex blend of pear, apple, tangerine, acacia

blossoms, chalky minerality and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very mineral personality, crisp acids, outstanding focus and grip and an almost crystalline impression to its soil tones on the very, very long and zesty finish. A beautiful bottle of Folatières from the domaine this year. 2018-2040. **93+**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Combettes”- Domaine Leflaive

I love Domaine Leflaive’s Combettes year in and year out, but the 2012 is going to be a very, very special vintage for this consistently great wine. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a pure and primary constellation of white peach, lemon, a touch of clementine, a marvelously complex base of minerality, a bit of iodine, lemon blossoms, vanillin oak and just a wisp of the beeswax to come in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and laser-like in its focus, with a great core of fruit, a tightly-knit and oh, so promising personality, crisp acids and stunning length and grip on the seamless and electric finish. A brilliant wine. 2020-2050. **95.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Pucelles”- Domaine Leflaive

In 2012, the Combettes and Pucelles *chez* Leflaive are clearly of grand cru quality. The magical Pucelles offers up a stunningly complex bouquet of delicious apples, tangerine, lemon, pear, a touch of *crème patissière*, crystalline minerality, orange zest, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and extremely elegant, with a great core, striking minerality and a very, very long, utterly refined finish that closes with outstanding cut and grip. A great, great young vintage of Pucelles. 2020-2050. **96.**

2012 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Leflaive is also a brilliant young wine. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a very elegant blend of pears, delicious apples, orange, citrus zest, a marvelously complex base of minerality, hints of the almond paste to come, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and full-bodied, with stunning elegance and refinement, a rock solid core of fruit, an almost silky texture on the attack, crisp acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, seamless and magical finish. Another absolutely great wine. 2022-2060. **96+.**

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet *chez* Leflaive is a bit more closed and primary at the present time than the lovely Bienvenues, but its potential is clearly evident and this too is going to be a reference point vintage for this great bottling. The primary bouquet is a mix of white peach, pear, tangerine, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, a bit of smokiness, citrus zest, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and tightly-knit, with a gorgeous core of pure fruit, striking soil signature, crisp acids, outstanding focus and balance and a very, very long and intense backend. This will need some time in the bottle to really blossom, but it will be great at its apogee. 2025-2065. **96+.**

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Leflaive

The 2012 Chevalier-Montrachet from Domaine Leflaive is stunning. The bouquet wafts from the glass in an utterly complete and magical blend of pear, tangerine, lemon, pastry cream, very complex, chalky minerality, lemon zest, lemon blossoms and a very stylish base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is gorgeous, with its full-bodied and brilliantly elegant palate impression offering up a great core of fruit, impeccable transparency, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the seamless, utterly suave and endless finish. Sheer brilliance! 2025-2075. **99.**

2011 Charmes-Chambertin- Leflaive et Associés

The 2011 Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Leflaive was bottled in May of 2013 and Monsieur Remy utilized eighty percent whole clusters for its fermentation. The wine was raised in twenty-five percent new oak in this vintage. This is an outstanding wine by any measure, and given that it was served after all of the fireworks of the domaine's 2012 white wines, it is probably even a bit better than my score suggests! The excellent nose delivers a very pure aromatic constellation of cherries, cocoa, dark soil tones, gamebirds, woodsmoke and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the focused and tangy finish. High class juice and a wonderful new addition to the firmament of great Charmes-Chambertin bottlings! 2020-2060. **94+**.

Domaine Etienne Sauzet (Puligny-Montrachet)

Domaine Sauzet is making simply stunning wines these days, and their 2012s will be outstanding examples of the vintage- albeit, cut in the deep and concentrated style of so many wines in the Côte de Beaune this year. The Boudot family began harvesting on September 17th in 2012, after receiving the full brunt of all the depredations of the vintage throughout the growing season, with poor flowering and plenty of hail being the most destructive challenges in this very short crop. The resulting yields at the domaine were down fully fifty percent in 2012, but this was allocated differently across their vineyards, as some were harder hit by hail damage than others. The path of the worst hail storm rolled over the village from a southeasterly direction and up through the premier crus in the central section of the slope of Clavoillon, Folatières and Champ Gain getting hit severely and then and on towards the crus located on the Hameau de Blagny and Meursault border, such as Truffières, la Garenne, and Chalumeaux. It was in these vineyards that the largest percentage of the crop was lost, so, for example, Domaine Sauzet has only two barrels in Folatières this year (out of a normal crop of eight to ten barrels!), lost sixty percent of the crop in Champ Gain, and there will be no Puligny premier cru Hameau de Blagny at all this year, as the meager one hundred liters that the Boudot family was able to press from the few remaining grapes went into the Puligny AC cuvée. The only silver lining in 2012 is that the grand crus in Puligny were less hard hit by hail, as the most violent storms only touched them on the periphery, and at least the yields on the grand crus are not as draconian as with some of the premier crus. The style of the 2012 Domaine Sauzet is deep, pure and quite concentrated, with great balances, stunning soil signatures and bright, snappy acids that give the wines truly exceptional precision and cut. In the vineyards where the very lowest yields were, the wines do tend to be a bit more dense in style, but none approach the point where they are too concentrated. In the era before premature oxidation, I would have said that these wines were all destined for legendary status in ten to twenty years, but the way things are now, it is likely that a great many of these wines will need drinking up because of premox fears before they have actually reached their true apogees. Such is the way of the world today. But, that said, the 2012 Domaine Sauzet wines are certainly not to be numbered amongst the 2012s that are too concentrated to be approached on the earlier side, and I am sure that the entire range from the Boudot family is going to make fans of this great old estate very, very happy. At the time of my visit in mid-November, the entire range had been racked and assembled into tanks in preparation for bottling early in the new year, but only the Bourgogne Blanc had already been filtered and had its sulfur adjusted, with most of the other wines in the lineup simply sitting in tanks after the assemblage. There are stellar 2012s!

2012 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Domaine Sauzet Bourgogne Blanc will be a fine example, as the wine offers up a bright and classy nose of apple, a touch of pineapple, lovely soil tones, a bit of smokiness and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and nicely accessible out of the blocks, with good focus and cut on the bouncy finish. 2014-2020+. **88.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Puligny *villages* had already had its SO2 adjusted prior to my visit and was still showing a bit on the nose, but underneath was a very good wine in the making. The bouquet is a nice blend of apple, peach, a touch of wheat toast, chalky soil tones, incipient notes of almond and just a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely broad-shouldered, with crisp acids, fine focus and a long, bright and zesty finish. This is going to be a charmer early on and is a wine to keep an eye out for on well-stocked wine lists. 2015-2025+. **90.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Enseignères”- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Enseignères” from Domaine Sauzet is really a stunning young bottle of village wine, with the inherent elegance of the best wines of the vintage very much in evidence here. The really lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, tangerine, incipient notes of butter, a touch of iodine, a fine base of soil, citrus blossoms and a gentle base of vanilla. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core, bright acids, lovely focus and grip and a very long, vibrant and bouncy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2015-2030+. **90+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Garenne”- Domaine Sauzet

The Clos de la Garenne is one of the vineyards that was really hit hard by hail, and the very low yields here have created a very concentrated wine. The bouquet is a deep and pure blend of apple, pineapple, fine soil tones, dried flowers, orange and a deft framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality, but with excellent focus and balance, sound acids and a very long, intense, but wide open finish that will allow very pleasurable drinking out of the blocks. This is very well balanced and will age well, but I suspect this wine’s early appeal is going to see most bottles consumed before any fears of premo are on the near horizon! 2014-2030+. **91.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Sauzet

As noted above, with sixty percent of the crop lost in 2012, the Champ Gains is another of the more concentrated premier crus in the Sauzet lineup this year. The wine is a bit finer in its aromatic profile than the La Garenne, offering up scents of peach, tangerine, white soils, a nice touch of stoniness, lemon blossoms and a gentle dollop of leanness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite primary in profile, with a fine core, nascent complexity, crisp acids and a very long, focused and youthful finish. This is fine juice in the making, but it will need a handful of years in the cellar to unwind its constituent components. 2017-2035+. **92.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Referts from the Boudot family is excellent, and as it lies lower down on the slope below Combettes, it was able to avoid the worst of the hail in Puligny and there is a bit more of this beautiful wine to go around in this vintage as a result. The superb nose wafts from the glass in a classic mélange of apple, peach, orange, a lovely base of soil tones, just a whisper of new wood and a pungent topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-

bodied and very pure and suave on the attack, with a fine core, excellent focus and grip and a very long, classically-proportioned and poised finish. A classic in the making. 2016-2035+. **92.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières”- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Perrières from Domaine Sauzet reminds me very strongly of their superb 2010 version, as it offers up a lovely bouquet of peach, orange, iodine, lovely minerality, a touch of high end smokiness and an orchard’s worth of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very primary in profile, with a deep, almost chewy texture in the mid-palate, crisp acids, excellent focus and grip and a very long, classy and youthful finish. This is high class juice. 2016-2035+. **92+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières” - Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Folatières from the Boudots is a wine that offers up a deep and very citric nose of orange, pink grapefruit, incipient notes of beeswax, a great base of chalky minerality and a nice topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and rock solid, with its full-bodied format very intense and concentrated, but also with superb delineation and incipient complexity in evidence. The acids here are bright and snappy, and the wine is focused, long and beautifully balanced. All of the fruit this year came from the tiny *lieu à dit* of En la Richarde at the extreme southern end of the vineyard, which lies above Caillerets and close to Chevalier-Montrachet, as the Sauzet vines in the central section of the vineyard were hammered by hail. Great juice. 2018-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Canet”- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Champ Canet from Domaine Sauzet is a superb example of the vintage, wafting from the glass in a deep and vibrant blend of tangerine, apple, a bit of smokiness, a great base of soil tones, iodine, dried flowers and orange oil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and racy, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent focus and balance, snappy acids and great length and grip on the very primary finish. This is a very intensely flavored vintage of Champ Canet *chez* Boudot and will need some time in the cellar to blossom, but it will be excellent once it has come around. 2018-2035+. **93+.**

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Combettes”- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Sauzet Combettes is another excellent wine in the making, offering up a deep and very, very complex nose of apple, clementine, raw almonds, a beautifully crystalline base of chalky soil tones, lemon blossom and citrus oils. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and structured like a grand cru, with superb depth at the core, crisp acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, impeccably balanced and very concentrated finish. This is a great vintage of Combettes in the making, but cut in the more powerful style of 2012, rather than the silken elegance of the 2010 version here. 2018-2040. **94.**

2012 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Sauzet is a dynamite wine, offering up a deep, pure and stunning bouquet of apple, white peach, clementines, beeswax, citrus oil, chalky soil tones, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite concentrated, with a supremely elegant profile, a great core, crisp acids and simply stunning length and grip on the long and racy finish. This is a broad-shouldered vintage of BBM, but at the same time, the inherent elegance and grace of this *terroir* are still very much in evidence. A great wine in the making. 2020-2060. **96+.**

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Sauzet

The Boudot family’s Bâtard-Montrachet is also absolutely stellar in 2012, as it too has retained a lovely sense of elegance to couple with its bottomless depth. The stunning nose is a

blend of pear, apple, lemon, tangerine, chalky soil tones, a touch of almond paste, citrus oil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and utterly suave on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, great cut and focus and a very long, intense and completely seamless finish. A great bottle of Bâtard-Montrachet. 2020-2060. **96+**.

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Chevalier-Montrachet from Domaine Sauzet hails from a parcel of vines right at the top of the slope, just below the St. Aubin border, and the wine is going to be stunning in this vintage. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, *crème patissière*, orange zest, a marvelously complex base of chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very refined, with superb mid-palate depth, excellent cut and grip, laser-like focus and a very, very long and profound finish. This is a great bottle of Chevalier, but such is the stellar quality of all the grand crus from the domaine this year that I cannot say that this is superior to the two great wines that preceded it! 2020-2060. **96+**.

2012 Montrachet- Domaine Sauzet

The 2012 Montrachet from Domaine Sauzet is stunningly elegant and absolutely bottomless this year. The gorgeous nose delivers a magical aromatic constellation of lemon, peach, gentle notes of pastry cream, a very complex base of chalky soil tones, lemon blossoms, lemon zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and seamless on the attack, with brilliant focus and balance, vibrant acids and simply stunning length and grip on the utterly refined and almost silky finish. The Domaine Sauzet Montrachet hails from two small parcels on the Chassagne side of the vineyard, and yet the inherent elegance of the 2012 would make me think that these grapes came from the heart of the Marquis de Laguiche parcel in the heart of Puligny! A brilliant, brilliant wine. 2020-2065. **98**.

Chassagne-Montrachet

Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard (Chassagne-Montrachet)

Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard has made absolutely stellar examples of the 2012 vintage, with both the reds and the white wines showing beautifully at the time of my November visit. I had the pleasure to taste on this visit with Céline Fontaine, Richard's daughter and the heir apparent at the domaine. The 2012 red wines had all been racked in late August of 2013, and were in good form for tasting, though the Morgeot and Clos St. Jean rouges were produced in very small quantities in this vintage (with the same yields as the family's parcel in Clos des Chênes) despite no serious hail damage, due to the old vines here being very adversely affected by "coulure" during the flowering. To give some idea of just how short the yields are for the reds here this year, there are two and a half barrels (out of a normal crop load of seven to eight barrels) in Clos des Chênes, and two barrels each of Morgeot and Clos St. Jean rouge (out of a normal year's five barrels of each wine). I found the superb 2012 reds chez Fontaine to be amongst the most suave and "Côte de Nuits-like" in terms of the texture of their tannins of any red wines I tasted from the Côte de Beaune on this trip, and they are indeed a very, very special range of reds in this vintage. If one is looking for superb examples of 2012 reds for the cellar that are going to offer up very good value and be simply stunning with a bit of bottle age, then this is a vintage to really explore the line of Chassagne rouge bottlings from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard, as they are very long on purity, sappy fruit and great soil signature and are going to really dazzle at their apogees. A couple of the reds were raised in a touch more new oak this year than is customary, as the yields were so short, but the differences are not dramatic (one

third new wood versus twenty percent for the Chassagne rouge for example) and the depth of the fruit has seemed to gobble up the new wood this year in any case.

On the white wine side of the ledger chez Fontaine, all of the 2012s had been bottled up in September of 2013, and yields varied quite dramatically depending on how each vineyard was affected by flowering difficulties and the hail. The best premier crus were Clos St. Jean and Clos de Muré, where yields were only off by about twenty-five percent, whereas in parcels such as Caillerets, the crop was only half what a “normal” harvest might provide. Happily, these are very classic and beautiful white Burgundies, with none of the hyper-concentration that some Côte de Beaune white wines can show, and they will be a superb portfolio when they are released into the market in the spring of 2014. What I find so enjoyable about visiting and tasting sur place with the Fontaine family is that their wide range of premier crus in Chassagne really allows one to see the striking differences of terroir in each vineyard, and this quality was very much in evidence in the vividly pure 2012 vintage and the tasting was really a “master class” in the study of Chassagne’s terroir. I did not taste the 2012 Montrachet on this visit, as there is so little of this cru this year that it made no sense to waste the wine, but the rest of the range are absolutely stellar examples of their respective cru and amongst the most beautiful wines to be found in the entire vintage. Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard is at the top of its game and making superb wines of both colors, and in a vintage where it will really pay to venture further afield than one might normally do, Burgundy lovers who have not yet discovered how great the wines are these days from Richard and Céline Fontaine will be richly rewarded to try and track down some of these stunning 2012s!

Vins Rouges

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard offers up a very pretty and pure nose of wild strawberries, cherries, woodsmoke and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is medium-full, sappy and transparent on the attack, with a juicy core, a fine expression of its underlying *terroir*, just a touch of tannin and fine focus on the long and tangy finish. Like so many 2012 Bourgogne bottlings, the short crop has really helped give this wine a suave personality that is very striking. 2014-2022+. **88.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

Though this wine was raised in a touch more new wood than is typical, it shows absolutely no signs of this change and really shows almost no oak influence whatsoever. The bouquet is deep, pure and sappy, wafting from the glass in a very stylish blend of red and black cherries, a nice touch of blueberry, dark soil tones, cocoa, woodsmoke and a floral topnote redolent of peonies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy, with fine-grained tannins, lovely soil inflection and impressive length and grip on the classy and quite elegant finish. This is a beautiful wine and a total sleeper of the vintage. 2016-2035. **90.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Clos St. Jean” Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

As there are only two barrels of Clos St. Jean rouge this year, Céline Fontaine commented that “our options were really either fifty percent new wood or zero- so we opted for on new barrel for the wine and are quite happy with how it has turned out.” The wine is indeed a very pure, sappy and classic example of this great red wine *terroir*, offering up a fine blend of pomegranate, red and black cherries, cocoa, a really suave and complex base of soil, woodsmoke and a pungent topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the

attack, with a sappy core, superb soil signature, very refined tannins and a very long, nascently complex and transparent finish. This is bargain city for a very serious and cellar-worthy bottle of red Burgundy! 2017-2040. **91.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot Rouge- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

There are again only two *pièces* of Morgeot rouge this year, with one of the barrels new. This shares the same purity and inherent elegance found in the Clos St. Jean, but with a bit more of a black fruity personality. The fine bouquet delivers a mélange of plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and a bit more reserved in personality out of the blocks, with excellent mid-palate concentration, ripe, chewy tannins and a very long, very pure and perfectly balanced finish. This will take a few more years to blossom than the outstanding Clos St. Jean, but this is also going to be a very lovely bottle at maturity and is another absolute steal in 2012. 2020-2045. **91+.**

2012 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

There is one new barrel out of two and a half this year for the 2012 Clos des Chênes, so this is forty percent, but the new oak really is only a passing afterthought in this superb example. The gorgeous nose soars from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, red plums, gamebirds, a very, very complex base of soil, cocoa, a touch of vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very soil-driven, with a fine core of sappy fruit, fine-grained tannins and outstanding length and grip on the complex, poised and tangy finish. This is a classic bottle of Clos des Chênes in the making! 2020-2050. **93+.**

2012 Pommard “Rugiens”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

These thirty year-old vines are beautifully-situated in Rugiens, at the very bottom of the Rugiens *Hautes* section of the vineyard. The inherent elegance of the 2012 vintage is very much in evidence in the lovely bouquet of cherries, quince, classy soil tones, incipient gamebirds, woodsmoke, roses and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very silky on the attack, with a fine core, ripe tannins and excellent length and grip on the primary and very transparent finish. At thirty years of age, these are some of the youngest pinot noir vines that the Fontaine family exploits, and they have not delivered quite the same level of mid-palate concentration and sappiness as the other reds in the cellar this year, but this is also going to be a very, very fine bottle in the fullness of time. 2020-2050+. **92+.**

Vins Blancs

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Chassagne *villages* from the Fontaines is excellent, wafting from the glass in a wide open and classy aromatic mix of pear, apple, a touch of pastry cream, chalky soils and discreet vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and nicely concentrated, with its full-bodied format offering up a superb core, excellent acidity and focus and a long, zesty and perfectly balanced finish. Lovely juice. 2015-2035. **89+.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Maltroie”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

I love the early elegance found in the 2012 Fontaine-Gagnard Maltroie this year, as this wine shows great clarity and class on both the nose and palate. The excellent bouquet delivers scents of pear, a touch of ripe peach, lime blossoms, a dollop of pastry cream, gorgeous soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very refined out of the blocks, with a lovely core, crisp acids and a very long, complex and stylish finish. Lovely juice. 2017-2035+. **90+.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Clos St. Jean”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Clos St. Jean is also very suave and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of oranges, pears, a touch of fresh almond, spring flowers, complex soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and suave on the attack, with an excellent core, fine focus and transparency and a very long, bright and vibrant finish. Another superb bottle, as these sixty year-old vines have really excelled in this vintage. 2016-2035+. **91+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet- “Clos des Murées”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Clos des Murées” from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard is also very, very pretty and shows off a distinct touch of exotic fruit in its aromatic constellation of delicious apple, pear, passion fruit, almond paste, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost silky on the attack, with a rock solid core, excellent focus and grip, fine framing acids and excellent grip on the very long and quite wide open finish. This is going to drink beautifully right from the outset and is a fine example of 2012. 2014-2035+. **92**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

Chenevottes can be so beautiful and floral right out of the blocks in inherently elegant vintages like 2012, and the Fontaine-Gagnard example this year is exactly that! The beautiful bouquet jumps from the glass in a blend of apple, tangerine, lemon blossoms, a beautifully complex base of soil and a judicious framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and succulent, with a fine core, crisp acids, fine focus and grip and a long, refined and elegant finish. Normally there are only two barrels of Chenevottes each year in the Fontaine’s cellars, but this year there is only this lonely *pièce* of truly outstanding wine. This too is going to be absolutely delicious to drink from the outset. 2014-2035. **92**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet Vergers”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Vergers from the Fontaines is a bit more reserved in personality than the Chenevottes, but it too has lovely potential. The deep and very pure bouquet offers up notes of orange, pear, a hint of the passion fruit to come, *crème patissière*, beautiful, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in personality, with excellent mid-palate depth, bright acids and superb focus and grip on the long and youthful finish. This will be a beautiful bottle, but give it a few years in the cellar to blossom. 2016-2035+. **93**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grande Montagne”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Grande Montagne has really turned out beautifully, for despite this wine being produced from some of the very youngest vines at the domaine (twenty-five years of age), the short crop has given this wine real depth and dimension. The lovely bouquet is a mix of apple, pear, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, apple blossoms and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved on the attack, with a fine core, excellent acidity and focus, good balance and lovely length and grip on the finish. Good juice by any stretch of the imagination. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeots”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Fontaine-Gagnard Morgeots is flat out great wine! The superb nose jumps from the glass in a blend of pear, tangerine, lemon, crystalline minerality, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very, very vibrant, with a rock solid core, superb focus and grip, excellent complexity and a very long, well-balanced and electric finish. Morgeots does not often come along this elegant and this wine is very special indeed. 2017-2040. **94**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Boudriotte”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Boudriotte from the Fontaine family is also a very lovely wine, but it suffers a bit in its placement in having to follow the stellar Morgeots this year, as this is a far more laid back and structurally easy-going wine. The bouquet is bright and very pretty in its mix of orange, apple, a touch of almond paste, lovely minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite wide open, with good mid-palate concentration, fine framing acids and lovely length on the pure and silky finish. This will drink beautifully from the outset, but it is not quite in the same league as the 2012 Morgeots *chez* Fontaine. 2014-2025+. **91+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Caillerets had the lowest yields of the white wines in the Fontaine stable, but the low *rendement* here translated into a wine of truly exquisite ripeness (13.5 percent without chapitalization!) and brilliant purity and balance. The stunning nose offers up scents of delicious apples, tangerine, lemon zest, spring flower, vanillin oak and a magically complex base of chalky minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and properly reserved out of the blocks, with a rock solid core, racy acids, superb transparency and a very, very long, focused and complex finish. This is an absolutely classic example of this brilliant *terroir*. 2019-2035+. **94+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Romanée”- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

After the vinous fireworks of the 2012 Caillerets, I was not really expecting the Fontaine-Gagnard la Romanée to be able to keep pace, but there is no doubt that this wine is every bit as good (or even a hair better?) than the stunning Caillerets. The brilliant bouquet delivers scents of pear, orange, lemon, complex, chalky minerality, white flowers and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nascently complex, with a bottomless core, stunning backend mineral drive, crisp acids and laser-like focus on the poised and utterly classic finish. Great, great juice. 2018-2040. **94+**.

2012 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet from the Fontaines is a beautiful wine that is extremely long on elegance, budding complexity and magical refinement and depth. The stunning nose is a blend of apple, tangerine, pear, *crème patissière*, complex, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and really rock solid at the core, with stunning delineation and focus, zest acids and a very, very long, primary and classy finish that closes with great backend mineral drive. A brilliant young bottle of Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet. 2019-2045+. **96**.

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard

The 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard is equally stunning, offering up a pure and still quite closed nose of apple, pear, a hint of the butter to come, deep base of soil, spring flowers, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great core, seamless balance, laser-like focus and simply brilliant length and grip on the young, pure and classic finish. Magical juice. 2020-2050. **96**.

Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils (Chassagne-Montrachet)

Alex Moreau has made absolutely brilliant wines in 2012, and these seem likely to be some of the reference points wines of his career. The low yields of the vintage have produced dramatically intense, pure and snappy white wines chez Moreau, and the 2012 reds are equally superb. Overall, yields were off by fully fifty percent at Domaine Moreau from a “normal” crop, with picking getting started on September 18th of this year. As Alex Moreau observed, “it was not

only that the crop was so low in terms of bunches on the vines, but when we pressed the bunches, there was just so little juice.” As is typical at the time of my November visits to Domaine Moreau, the white wines were in varying stages of their élevage, with the Bourgogne Blanc having already been bottled right before the harvest of 2013, the Saint Aubin and Chassagne villages bottling already assembled, fined and filtered in preparation for bottling soon after the first of the year, and the premier cru whites all assembled in tank, but not yet fined or filtered. These were some of the more concentrated 2012 whites that I tasted on this trip, but I did not find the same overwhelming sensation of “too much of a good thing” with these wines that I found with several other 2012 whites that I tasted on this trip, and I have little doubt that the 2012 Domaine Moreau white wines are destined to be some of the greatest white wines to be found in Burgundy in this great vintage. With the 2012 white wines from Alex Moreau, the low yields have produced a sense of intensity of flavor that is very much aligned with the inherent elegance of the best wines of the vintage, and the wines do not come across as overly corpulent out of the blocks, just very, very intense versions of their classic personalities. Amongst the red wines here in 2012, the Bourgogne had already been bottled at the time of my visit, with the remainder of the cellar racked two weeks prior to my visit and returned to barrels for further élevage.

Vins Blancs

2012 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Domaine Moreau Bourgogne Blanc was showing very well for having only recently been bottled, as it offers up a very pretty and vibrant nose of apple, white peach, spring flowers, a nice base of soil and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and wide open in personality, with fine focus and depth at the core, bright acids and good length and grip on the bouncy finish. A fine example. 2014-2020. **88.**

2012 St. Aubin “en Remilly”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 en Remilly was one of Alex Moreau’s most generous yields, as in this vineyard he was able to harvest a full thirty-five hectoliters per hectare- draconian yields for most vintages, but actually amongst his highest in the tiny crop of 2012! This is going to be an absolutely stellar wine, as it wafts from the glass in a beautifully focused mélange of apple, pear, tangerine, complex, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and rock solid at the core, with great cut and grip and very impressive intensity on the laser-like backend from these low yields. A beautiful bottle of St. Aubin. 2014-2030. **91+.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Chassagne AC *chez* Moreau is both very elegant and very concentrated in this vintage. The lovely bouquet offers up scents of apple, passion fruit, orange blossoms, a superb base of soil, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and again, simply rock solid at the core, with great cut and grip, outstanding focus and a very long, pure and racy finish. A dynamite *villages*! 2014-2030+. **91.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Moreau Maltroie is going to be a very refined example of this cru, as it delivers a fine, youthful bouquet of apple, tangerine, a touch of iodine, a lovely base of deep soil tones, citrus zest and orange blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and far more closed than the Remilly or the Chassagne AC, with superb mid-palate

concentration, outstanding focus and snap and a very long, primary and beautifully balanced finish. Lovely juice in the making. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vergers”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Vergers can sometimes wear its heart on its sleeve, but the 2012 from Domaine Moreau possesses a lovely sense of reserve that augurs very well for its future evolution in bottle. The superb nose delivers a blend of apple, tangerine, a nice touch of lemon oil, spring flowers and a beautiful base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very concentrated in style, with great cut and grip, bottomless depth and a very long, primary and racy finish. Though this is quite powerful in style, it is also a very elegant young wine and will blossom into a very, very special bottle of Vergers with a few years of bottle age. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Moreau Chenevottes is a stellar example of the vintage, with great intensity of flavor and all of the early charm of this fine premier cru. The deep, intense and classy nose jumps from the glass in a mélange of passion fruit, clementines, a beautifully complex base of soil, a touch of iodine, orange oil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully delineated, with a rock solid core, bright acids, excellent focus and grip and stunning backend cut on the very long, zesty and laser-like finish. This is a brilliant young bottle of Chenevottes. 2016-2035+. **93+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Champgains”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Moreau Champgains is structured like a grand cru in this vintage, with a very deep, pure and still quite primary personality. The lovely nose offers up a superb blend of apple, pear, fine soil tones, a bit of orange, blossoming notes of the buttery overtones to come with bottle age, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerfully built, with a great core, brisk acids and stunning length and grip on the focused and youthful finish. Of all the premier crus in the Moreau cellars this year, this is the one that will need a bit of time to unwind, as the combination of great concentration and serious structure will make this a bit burly in the glass until it has had some time to blossom with bottle age. 2018-2035+. **93**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau makes one of my absolute favorite renditions of Morgeot, and his 2012 is a marvelous synthesis of intensity and elegance. The great nose jumps from the glass in a blend of pear, lemon oil, a very complex base of minerality, citrus zest, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and nascently complex, with bottomless depth at the core, brisk acids, laser-like focus and outstanding length and grip on the stunning young finish. This is a baby Bâtard-Montrachet in 2012! 2018-2040. **94**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”- Dom. Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Grandes Ruchottes is absolutely stellar and another wine of grand cru quality without a doubt in this vintage. As is the case with the marvelous Morgeot, the 2012 Grandes Ruchottes beautifully synthesizes concentration and elegance in its aromatic constellation of pear, tangerine, a dollop of iodine, a beautifully complex base of minerality, white flowers, lemon oil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very suave on the attack, with a great core, striking mineral drive and huge backend energy on the laser-like and very, very long and racy finish. What a brilliant wine! 2018-2040. **95**.

2012 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau's 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet is the stuff that legends are made from, soaring from the glass in a magical blend of pear, orange, lemon, a glorious base of soil tones, citrus oils, gentle vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with racy acids, brilliant focus and balance, bottomless depth and simply stunning poise and purity on the very, very long and dancing finish. This is a powerful bottle of 2012 Bâtard-Montrachet that just exudes charm, refinement and class. 2020-2060. **97.**

2012 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Domaine Moreau Chevalier is another stunning wine. The great nose delivers a brilliant mélange of apple, white peach, a nice touch of pink grapefruit, pastry cream, chalky minerality, orange zest, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off magical mid-palate depth, with racy acids, laser-like focus and gorgeous purity and nascent complexity on the very, very long and supremely elegant finish. Stunning juice. 2020-2060. **98.**

Vins Rouges

2012 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Bourgogne rouge had already been bottled at the time of my visit and was raised this year entirely in four-wine barrels. The nose is pure and quite stylish in its blend of black cherries, a touch of blackberry, dark chocolate, soil and a nice, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is quite full-bodied and deep for Bourgogne, with a lovely core, fine focus and just a touch of tannin perking up the long and classy finish. This is really good Bourgogne rouge! 2014-2020+. **88.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge- Dom. Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 Chassagne Vieilles Vignes rouge was showing lovely potential at the time of my visit, offering up a deep and concentrated bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, a bit of cocoa, incipient notes of game, a lovely base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with moderate, well-integrated tannins, fine focus and grip and a very long, well-balanced and youthful finish. This is going to be lovely. 2019-2040. **90.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Cardeuse” Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2012 la Cardeuse is an excellent wine in the making and really shows just how far Alex Moreau has come with his red wines as he has dialed back the percentage of new wood for these bottlings. The bouquet is deep, complex and really refined in its youthful blend of dark berries, cassis, espresso, currant leaf, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a lovely topnote of dried violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and suave on the attack, with a rock solid core, ripe tannins and great length and grip on the focused and very classy young finish. This will be a great value! 2020-2045+. **92.**

2012 Volnay “Santenots”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

I like the 2012 Santenots from Domaine Moreau very well, but there is a touch of *herbacité* on the nose and palate that may show that the vines here did not quite get the same ripeness in the grapes as was the case for the two Chassagne *rouge* bottlings after the battering of the hail. The bouquet is deep, nascently complex and quite concentrated in its mélange of cassis, dark berries, fresh herb tones, dark soil, bitter chocolate, cedar and woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with a fine core, excellent transparency, ripe tannins and very fine length and grip on the finish. This really is very good wine and there is a

possibility that the dollop of *herbacité* here is simply a function of the recent racking, and if this is the case, then my score is ridiculously conservative. 2020-2045+. **90+**.

2012 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Normally, Alex Moreau has two barrels of Clos des Chênes, but in 2012, there is only one half barrel of this lovely wine. The nose delivers a fine aromatic constellation of dark berries, French roast, woodsmoke, gamebirds, dark soil tones and a dollop of fresh herbs in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely reserved, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe, well-integrated tannins and fine length and grip on the soil-driven and very classy finish. Today, the perception of complete ripeness is superior in the Clos des Chênes than it is in the Santenots. 2022-2060. **92+**.

2012 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

There will not be much 2012 Moreau Caillerets to go around either in this vintage, but it will be well worth making a special search to find some of this superb young Volnay. The deep and very classy nose wafts from the glass in a black fruity mélange of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, a touch of bonfire and a nice dollop of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a rock solid core, outstanding focus and balance, ripe, well-integrated tannins and simply superb length and grip on the young and very, very promising finish. Great juice. 2022-2060. **93+**.

St. Aubin

Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy (St. Aubin)

It felt like snow on the November morning when I stopped by Domaine Lamy in St. Aubin, and as Olivier Lamy drove up he reported that it had indeed been snowing just south in Santenay, where he had been working on a parcel of new vines that he has purchased in 2012. There are two new Santenay bottlings in the Lamy lineup in 2012, and this is not the only new addition to the family’s portfolio, as there is also now a Chassagne-Montrachet “les Chaumées” from a lovely parcel of vines that lie right alongside the ancient vines that Michel Niellon makes his Chaumées les Truffières bottling from in this fine premier cru. The two new Santenays are premier cru rouge et blanc bottlings from the Clos des Gravières, which was long recognized as the very finest vineyard in Santenay and actually was ranked as a Tête de Cuvée (today’s equivalent of a grand cru) by Docteur Lavalley in the mid-nineteenth century! The parcel of the Clos planted to pinot noir is .28 hectares and that to chardonnay is .38 hectares, with all of the pinot noir planted in 1968 and the lion’s share of the chardonnay also planted in the same year. Monsieur Lamy did not produce the Clos des Gravières Blanc in this vintage, as the production was just too low, but the 2012 rouge is absolutely stunning and has to be one of the great bargains to be found in red Burgundy in this vintage! Besides these three fine new additions, 2012 is the first release of a “Haut Densité” bottling of village Puligny “Tremblots” as well, as Olivier planted a section here with additional vines in 2000 and the 2012 vintage marks the first time he has separated out the high density section of plantation out from the regular bottling and produced a special cuvée of this wine. Olivier joked that “other vignerons thought I was crazy when I first started planting at such high densities, as they could not understand the concept of doing more work in the vineyards with all of these additional vines, only to produce less wine-not more.” But, Monsieur Lamy has realized such great success with this method in his St. Aubin premier cru of Derrière Chez Edouard that he has been increasing the density of his planting in several other vineyards, including his small slice of Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet and the results speak for themselves. In the 2012 vintage, Olivier Lamy decided to use no new oak for his wines

and everything was raised in “one wine” and “two wine” barrels for the first time here. He explained that “the purity of the fruit in 2012 and the superb expression of terroir in each wine in this vintage were so special that I could not imagine covering this up with new wood this year.” Of course, one still gets a gentle touch of vanilla in white wines from one and two wine barrels, so the diminution of new wood here to zero in 2012 is not all that evident in the wines, but they do certainly sparkle with complex soil tones this year and the purity of fruit chez Lamy in this vintage is as fine as one will find anywhere in the Côte de Beaune. A few of the white wines had just been bottled prior to my visit, with most wines still either in barrel or assembled in tank for bottling early in the new year. Olivier Lamy is currently at the top of his game and making absolutely stellar wines, and his 2012s were amongst the finest range I tasted during this November trip.

Vins Rouges

2012 Santenay “Clos des Hâtes”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The parcel of Clos des Hâtes that Monsieur Lamy is working with is comprised of young vines that hail from *selection massale* cuttings that originated with Domaine Marquis d'Angerville in Volnay. This is really a lovely bottle in the making in 2012, as it offers up impressive purity and elegance in its bouquet of red and black cherries, coffee, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and incipient notes of the venison to come. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and juicy on the attack, with fine focus and balance, just a touch of suave tannin and lovely length and grip on the finish. Really a lovely bottle in the making that I would give a few years for the tannins to fall away. 2016-2035. **88.**

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “La Gaujomme” Rouge- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

This fine Chassagne *rouge* bottling *chez* Lamy hails from a parcel of sixty year-old pinot noir vines (I made the mistake last year of reporting that these were six years old!) and these old vines have produced a lovely bottle in 2012. The lovely nose is a blend of black cherries, dark berries, a bit of bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a nice touch of balsam bough in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with good focus and structure, a fine core and a long, chewy finish that shows a bit of a tannic edge and will need a few years to soften up and blossom in the bottle. 2016-2035. **88.**

2012 St. Aubin “Derrière Chez Edouard” Rouge- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Derrière Chez Edouard” Rouge from Olivier Lamy is an excellent wine, and as this section of vineyards in St. Aubin did not get hit with hail in this vintage, the tannins here are a bit more velvety in the style of the Côte de Nuits in 2012, rather than the chewier tannins generally found in the Côte de Beaune this year. The lovely nose is a blend of red and black cherries, cocoa, chalky soil tones, smoke and a floral topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully structured, with a lovely core, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the nascently complex and classy finish. This is going to be a very fine bottle of St. Aubin *rouge* and really only needs a year or two to fully blossom. 2015-2035. **89.**

2012 Santenay “Clos des Gravières”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The new Clos des Gravières bottling from Olivier Lamy is planted with forty-four year-old vines and this is really a superb new addition to the domaine's portfolio. The deep and sappy nose offers up a very refined blend of red and black cherries, chalky minerality, woodsmoke, a touch of gamebird, coffee and a topnote of peonies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very soil-driven, with a lovely core of sappy fruit, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused and very elegant finish. This will need a few years in the cellar to allow

the tannins to fall away a bit and the secondary layers of complexity to emerge. This is one of the red wine steals of the vintage! 2017-2035+. **90+**.

Vins Blancs

2012 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Domaine Lamy Bourgogne blanc had just been bottled a week prior to my visit, but had not yet shut down from the *mise* and was showing very well indeed. These were the very last vines to be picked by Olivier in 2012 and he noted that the yields were very, very low in this vintage. The wine has really turned out beautifully, offering up an intense nose of apple, lime, stony minerality, citrus blossoms and a whisper of vanilla. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with fine focus and excellent length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This really transcends its appellation this year. 2014-2020. **88**.

2012 St. Aubin “La Princée”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 La Princée bottling (this is St. Aubin *villages*) had also been bottled one week prior to my visit and this was now starting to show signs of clamping down after the *mise*. The bouquet is a bit unsettled at the present time, but offers up scents of apple, white peach, a lovely base of white soil tones, a bit of citrus peel, smoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and elegant, with a good core, bright acids and very good length and grip. I am sure this will be lovely and should place at the top of my projected range of score, but it was a bit crankier about being tasted than the Bourgogne. 2015-2025+. **89-90**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “Le Concis du Champs”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

In contrast to the Bourgogne blanc, which was the last parcel picked in 2012, the Chassagne *villages* vines were the first harvested in this vintage. This is really a beautiful wine in 2012, offering up a very floral nose of apple, pear, a touch of pastry cream, an orchard-full of apple blossoms and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and classy, with a fine core, crisp acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and well-balanced and very energetic finish. Classy juice, but I would give it a couple of years to really let its secondary layers really emerge, as this is going to be a dynamite bottle. 2017-2035+. **91**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Les Tremblots”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Puligny AC bottling of Tremblots is also a ringing success in this vintage, delivering a very refined bouquet of apple, white peach, chalk, spring flowers and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with fine mid-palate depth, bright acids and lovely length and grip. Today, I find that there is just a touch more complexity in the 2012 Chassagne *villages* bottling, but this may simply be a reflection of different stages of evolution of the two wines in barrel- certainly the Tremblots seems a bit more wide open right now and will be the better drink out of the blocks. 2014-2030. **90**.

2012 St. Aubin “Clos du Meix”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Clos du Meix bottling from Olivier Lamy is really a very stylish and pretty wine that is going to drink beautifully right from the outset as well. The pure and very elegant nose wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, *crème patissière*, white flowers, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and vibrant, with a lovely core, fine focus and very good length and grip on the wide open and classy finish. Good juice. 2014-2025+. **90+**.

2012 St. Aubin “Derrière Chez Edouard” Blanc- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The “regular” bottling of Derrière Chez Edouard is outstanding in 2012, offering up a very pure and complex bouquet of tangerine, pear, pastry cream, a beautiful base of minerality,

apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very mineral in personality, with excellent mid-palate depth, zesty acids and superb length and grip on the vibrant and wonderfully focused finish. This will not need too long in the cellar to really blossom, but I would try to keep my hands off of it for at least a year or so and really let it start hitting on all cylinders. A beautiful bottle of premier cru St. Aubin! 2015-0235+. **92+**.

2012 St. Aubin “les Frionnes”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 les Frionnes is more floral and fruit-driven in personality than the very mineral Derrière Chez Edouard, but it too is a superb young bottle of St. Aubin. The utterly refined nose wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, a touch of fresh almond, gentle chalkiness, spring flowers and a touch of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a lovely core of pure fruit, with crisp acids, fine focus and balance and a long, suave and classy finish. Lovely. 2015-2035. **92.**

2012 St. Aubin “Clos de la Chatenière”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Clos de la Chatenière is another excellent wine, with a superb signature of soil tied to the pure and strikingly beautiful fruit tones of this vintage. The excellent bouquet delivers a blend of apple, pear, a touch of iodine, chalky minerality, gentle notes of orange zest in the upper register, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and again, strikingly mineral in its backend, with zesty acids, excellent focus and grip and a very long, elegant and energetic finish. This will want a few years of bottle age to fully blossom and should age very well indeed. 2016-2035+. **92+**.

2012 St. Aubin “Murgers Dents de Chien”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Domaine Lamy Murgers Dents de Chien is a brilliant bottle of premier cru white Burgundy and is every bit as compelling as some of its neighbors from premier crus with more illustrious reputations (today) in the villages of Puligny and Chassagne. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a mélange of tangerines, pears, delicious apples, a nice touch of pastry cream, a superb base of chalky soil tones and a delicate framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a great core, exceptional balance, vibrant acids and outstanding length and grip on the transparent and supremely refined finish. This is a great bottle of wine. 2017-2035+. **93+**.

2012 St. Aubin “en Remilly”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 en Remilly from Olivier Lamy is equally stellar, with a sense of elegance and depth that is simply the quintessence of the vintage. The gorgeous nose delivers an aromatic constellation of pears, delicious apples, *crème patissière*, a very refined base of limestone minerality, spring flowers and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very pure and focused, with a full-bodied and wonderfully elegant palate impression, fine mid-palate depth, crisp acids and a very, very long, nascently complex and snappy finish. There is a lovely sense of reserve in the en Remilly this year that augurs very, very well for its future development. Another outstanding wine in the making! 2018-2040. **93+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Macherelles”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Macherelles has really benefited from the inherent elegance of the vintage, as this is a *terroir* with a lot of clay in the soil and this is not always the most elegant of Chassagne premier crus, but in 2012 this is very, very refined. The superb nose is a blend of apple, tangerine, a lovely base of soil, citrus blossoms, incipient notes of almond paste and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with fine core and a very nice sense of reserve. The finish is long, zesty and quite energetic, with excellent cut and grip. The 2012 is the finest vintage I have yet tasted of Macherelles *chez* Lamy. 2017-2035+. **92+**.

2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Chaumées”- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Chaumées” is a fine new addition here, as the inaugural rendition offers up a very classy and deep bouquet of apple, pear, passion fruit, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, apple blossoms and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant, with great purity on the attack, a rock solid core, crisp acids and outstanding mineral drive and grip on the focused and very, very long finish. A stunning bottle of Chassagne premier cru. 2017-2035+. **93+**.

2012 Puligny-Montrachet “Les Tremblots” Haut Densité - Domaine Lamy

The Haut Densité section of Tremblots is a mix of twelve year-old vines from the new plantations, interspersed with forty year-old vines from the original planting in the vineyard. There is only a single, 400 liter *demi-muid* of this wine in 2012 and it is lovely, offering up a pure and very intense bouquet of pear, white peach, very complex, chalky minerality, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and far more defined by its underlying minerality than the “regular” bottling of Tremblots, with vibrant acids and excellent length and grip on the focused and very classy finish. Fine juice that will need a few years in the cellar to fully blossom. 2016-2035. **93**.

2012 St. Aubin “Derrière Chez Edouard” Haut Densité - Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

As I have noted in the past, this parcel is planted at 40,000 vines per hectare (rather than the traditional 10-15,000 vines per hectare) and the 2012 is another very, very strong testament to just how well the high density planting works here. The 2012 is stellar, wafting from the glass in a complex and truly special aromatic mélange of apple, pear, a touch of passion fruit, a great base of chalky minerality, orange zest, white flowers and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and the epitome of elegance, with a rock solid core, stunning transparency, crisp acids and magical length and grip on the focused and impeccably well-balanced finish. Great juice. 2017-2035+. **94+**.

2012 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Hubert et Olivier Lamy

The 2012 Lamy Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet is now starting to feel some of the effects of the high density planting here as well and this new vintage is the most brilliant example of this marvelous *terroir* I have yet had the pleasure to taste. The bouquet is just beautiful in its elegance and sense of refinement, as it jumps from the glass in a magical blend of apple, pear, orange, kaleidoscopic, chalky minerality, citrus zest, *crème patissière*, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very, very pure, very deep and full-bodied, with a seamless sense of elegance, a rock solid core of fruit, brilliant minerality and stunning cut and grip on the perfectly balanced, endless finish. A brilliant, brilliant wine. 2018-2040+. **97**.



This issue is dedicated to the memory of Patrick Bize.

May you find the peace and justice in your next stop that you sought every day here and may we learn from your example and not spend the gift of our days in vain and idle ways.