

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

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**THE RIPE, STYLISTICALLY-VARIED AND OFTEN, VERY FINE
2020 VINTAGE IN BURGUNDY**



The winter sun sinking low over the Clos de la Bussière vineyard in Morey St. Denis (courtesy Jeremy Seysses).

It had been far too long since I was last in Burgundy tasting in the cellars and visiting with *vignerons*. Far too long. So, even with the Covid pandemic continuing to tenaciously hold on across the globe, I was very happy to finally have the opportunity to return to taste in the cellars of Burgundy again at the end of November and first two weeks of December of this year. I had been forced to cancel a trip to the region in the early spring of 2020, right at the outset of the pandemic, and it turned out that I could have actually gone ahead and visited in March of that year, as I later found out that I had already had Covid during the third week of February (before we really even knew there was a global pandemic brewing) and I would have been a safe visitor for *vignerons* in the region to have hosted by the middle of the following month. But, that was at the very outset of the pandemic and my “severe flu” from February of 2020 (which turned out to eventually diagnosed as Covid through anti-body testing many months later) never occurred to me to have been Covid, given the astronomical number of people who were dying from the disease at the outset and the overall panic that descended on the world in March of that year. So, I went ahead and cancelled my trip, feeling that it was the prudent course of action at the time. Consequently, I missed tasting at my customary second round of domaines in the region and

their 2018 wines, and then did not have a chance to travel back here until the end of 2021. It has been a long, long haul of darkness and it was so good to finally have an opportunity to share a little light in the cellars of Chablis and the Côte d'Or once again after nearly two years of pandemic.

Not that the world has returned to “normal” since the onset of the pandemic, and one can surmise that the normal life we knew and so often took for granted before the pandemic may never actually return completely and we are in for some sort of continued, dystopian, fractured universe for the foreseeable future. It turns out that just ahead of my visit to the region, the annual Paulée de Meursault was held this year and it ended up being a “super spreader” event and more than eighty people fell ill to Covid in its aftermath. So the pandemic has still not relented. But, at least as the clouds continue to hover, there remains good wine and even better wine people. And, as has always been the case, there is an overabundance of both to be found in the beautiful heart of Burgundy. The vintage of 2020 in Burgundy has an amazing number of great wines quietly resting in cask in the cellars. However, as has also been the case in the previous two vintages of 2018 and 2019 (the latter of which I will have much more to say about in a following article on that year), 2020 is far from a consistently great year for the red wines of the region, as there were plenty of challenges that had to be overcome to produce great wine in this growing season. Based on my tastings, 2020 seems to be a far more consistently fine vintage for white Burgundy, without the stylistic twists and turns one finds with the reds. Interestingly, the warm summer of 2020 is now looked back upon by *vignerons* in Burgundy as a carefree and easy vintage, in the aftermath of the never-ending struggle that was the growing season of 2021. This most recent summer was beset by every type of malady a winegrower could hope to avoid, with severe frost, rain, oidium and cold temperatures and endless grey skies showing the sullen underbelly of climate change, as for every handful of summers baking away in the new heat of the globe in the twenty-first century, there is a contrasting, fractured, stormy and cataclysmically cold stretch of weather which is every bit as divorced from “normal” weather patterns we took for granted only a decade or two ago as is the ever-mounting heat. As Etienne Chaix of Domaine Joseph Voillot in Volnay so poignantly commented about the growing season of 2021, “every Monday it looked like we were going to lose the entire crop, and struggled all week and finally got things starting to look salvageable by the weekend- only to be faced with yet another new problem the next Monday and start all over again!” There will be plenty more to write about the growing season of 2021 next year in the report on those wines, but the cold of that summer did also play a supporting role in shaping the vintage of 2020.

Turning back for now to the 2020 vintage in Burgundy, we must remember that many of the cellars here are not temperature controlled, as heretofore, there has really been no need to do so. That may change as global temperatures continue to climb. The cellars are deep enough to historically not get very warm in the summer and have always been properly cold in the winter, and the wines in cask have generally responded well to the gentle seasonal shifts of temperature in the passive cellars of many Burgundy domaines. However, the very cold summer of 2021 certainly had an effect on the pace and style of evolution of the 2020 vintage resting in cask, as fermentations and malos were often quite drawn out in this year, due to the remarkably cold and damp summer conditions outside of the cellars in 2021. So, despite a very early harvest date in 2020, which in theory, should put the wines in an advanced stage of evolution during their *elevage* in cask in early December of 2021 (due to their having been picked a month earlier than

normal), many of the 2020 wines I tasted showed the influence of the quite cold summer months of 2021 and were still rather primary in personality and actually lagging in the pace of their *elevage*. This was particularly true of the red wines which I tasted on this trip. The sluggish pace of evolution was most often manifest in the still quite sappy, black fruity personalities of the wines, with their underlying expressions of soil often still buried beneath the lovely fruit tones of the vintage and were more akin to wines only a half dozen months into their evolutions in cask, rather than wines which had already been in barrel for more than a year!

As I mentioned in passing above, most winegrowers in the region would tell you that the spring and summer of 2020 were really very easy for them, with March quite warm and the sap starting to rise and budbreak quite advanced in this year, which eventually was one of the primary reasons that the harvest ending up being so early. Happily, there was no frost in April, so the early start was just fine for the plants and the entire vegetative cycle was simply fast-forwarded by the precocious spring, at least for the first couple of months of the summer. Flowering generally took place around the third week of May (generally three weeks early) and everything moved forward apace. Consequently, the vast majority of domaines in the Côte d'Or starting picking again in August in 2020, with many actually starting earlier in 2020 by a couple of days than in the ignominiously torrid summer of 2003. But, with global warming, early harvests are getting to be less and less out of the range of the “new normal”, as many producers also starting picking in August in the baking summer of 2018. That said, most *vignerons* started bringing in the bunches in 2020 a week ahead of their dates in 2018. While *vignerons* now look back on the growing season of 2020 as fairly easy and not demanding of all that much vigilance and hard work out in the vines, the year in the Côte d'Or was very much shaped by its long bout of drought and hydric stress was one of the most important factors shaping the style and size of the vintage, and again, this seems to have been most keenly felt with the pinot noir. Happily, this was not the case in Chablis, as the summer of 2020 saw a few rain storms pass through with good timing, so that hydric stress was nowhere near as prevalent as further south in this vintage. There were also a couple of blistering heat spikes during the summer of 2020, which set record high temperatures across much of Europe, but in general, they were of fairly short duration each time and it was the drought conditions that were of most concern for *vignerons* in 2020.

The drought in the Côte d'Or was very hard on the vines during the hottest months of the summer of 2020, but as is always the case, the effects varied depending on the age of vines, depth and composition of soils in the vineyards. Older vines have better developed root systems, which are already deep underground and can better access any subterranean water sources in periods of drought. Happily, the winter leading into the growing season of 2020 had been cold and wet, so there were some ample water reserves built up going into the spring and summer. Deeper soils with more clay in them are also beneficial to the vines when it does not rain for long periods of time, as they retain moisture better than very chalky soils. So, there is a complicated mosaic of reflections from the drought to be found in the wines of 2020, depending upon these many natural factors. It also certainly appears that chardonnay vines withstood the worst of the drought better than pinot noir in the Côte d'Or, at least when viewed through the prism of eventual yields in 2020, as the crop size for chardonnay was far closer to “normal” than was the case with pinot noir in this vintage. Take for example Gilles Lafouge's yields in his parcels in Auxey-Duresses, Pommard and Meursault. He observed that for “the white wine harvest of 2020, yields were quite correct- not overly generous, but quite normal, whereas we were down more

than thirty percent for the reds.” These sentiments were echoed up and down the Côte during my trip.

I puzzled about the better yields for chardonnay than pinot noir in the Côte d’Or in 2020 during most of my trip, as most domaines reported that they fared similarly to Monsieur Lafouge and had pretty “correct” yields for their chardonnay, but a far smaller crop for pinot noir. Finally, on the next to last day of my trip, I asked Arnaud Ente about this, supposing that hydric stress was the key factor here and that chardonnay was actually a bit better at resisting the pressures of drought than is pinot noir. However, Monsieur Ente assured me that the inverse is actually the case, and the pinot noir vines are actually better at adapting to hydric stress than is chardonnay in general. He explained that the differences in yields has more to do with the heat spikes of 2020 and the generally warm summer, more than with the hydric stress. With the pinot noir vines, in hot summers like 2020, there is often a marked difference in the ripening of bunches on the sun-facing side of the plant and the backside of the plant where the grapes do not get as much direct hours of sunlight as on the sunnier side. So, Monsieur Ente noted, “with pinot noir, there is always a compromise that has to be made between the ripeness levels of the front and back sides of the pinot noir plant, and in 2020, while *vignerons* waited for the backside bunches to ripen up physiologically, some of the sunnier side bunches got past that ideal moment of ripeness. My explanation for this phenomenon is probably quite simplistic, as we were speaking in French and I may have missed some of the finer nuances of this conversation, but this is the gist of our conversation. Additionally, pinot noir is far more susceptible to sunburn than chardonnay, so that too played a role in the lower yields for pinot noir, as any berries or bunches that were sunburnt on the “sunny side” of the plant, while waiting for the backside bunches to catch up in ripeness (particularly of their tannins), would have had to be sorted out prior to pressing. Consequently, this seems to have been an important contributory factor to the typically lower yields for pinot noir in 2020 than chardonnay in the Côte d’Or.

Happily, there was finally some precipitation in the Côte d’Or around the 23rd and 24th of August that relieved the hydric stress to some degree and helped get a bit more juice into the bunches leading into harvest. However, not everyone was able to benefit from this rain, as some *vignerons* had already commenced to pick prior to the rains falling (or had already set the wheels in motion with picking teams scheduled) and so did not have a few days to allow the water to work its way up into the bunches. The reason some producers felt the need to get rolling with the harvest ahead of this rain on the 23rd was that the bunches were starting to “raisin” out on the vines, with dehydration starting to threaten the health of the berries and some producers figured that the maturation process was effectively over by this time and they might as well get started with the picking. Additionally, another heat spike arrived around this same time period, meaning that gathering the grapes was going to have to take place under less than ideal conditions of baking temperatures and it seemed likely that the bunches were going to simply accelerate in their dehydration and attendant concentration of sugars, acids and tannins. As I will go into a bit further on in this article, the drought was nowhere near as severe in Chablis in 2020, so dehydrating bunches and blocked maturation were simply not an issue at all in that part of Burgundy and the style of the vintage in Chablis is a bit different from in the Côte d’Or for this reason. More on that below.



Consequently, when tasting through a sizable range of cellars in the Côte d'Or, one sees quite a bit of variation in style that is directly related to when a given domaine decided to start picking their grapes. Again, this is most evident with the red wines of 2020. Those who had already gotten started ahead of the beneficial showers, or before the water had worked up into the bunches, can often have very concentrated wines, as there was very little juice in the berries and the wines have amplified expressions of fruit, tannin and acidity. Those who got started with their harvests a handful of days after the rains had brought needed juice back into the berries seem to have found the best balance in their grapes, as the fruit plumped up a bit with the addition of the water and their wines are consequently less overtly concentrated in style than those who picked a bit earlier. And then, there are those who continued to wait a bit longer, perhaps hoping to get to that magic number of “one hundred days” between budbreak and picking, so that they could get ideal physiological ripeness in their bunches. As the blistering heat continued at the end of August and early September, the few examples I tasted that were made from grapes brought in that first week or so of September show far less freshness and more stewed fruit tones than wines made from fruit collected ten days or two weeks earlier, and to my palate, those *vignerons* who picked late missed the opportunity to make truly great wines in 2020. But, to be fair to those who waited, the eventual texture of the tannins in the red wines was very much a concern for every winegrower leading into harvest, as sugars were sufficiently high already by mid-August to justify picking, but tannins were still not ready and many producers noted that they were very happy in the end, with how the tannins have turned out in their red wines of 2020, as there was widespread worry that they would end up being a bit coarse and green, due to the blocked maturation during the peak of the drought. So, it was a vintage whose

ultimate excellent quality, in general, was very much in the balance right up to the time that the bunches were brought into the *cuvées*.

The very high temperatures at the time of harvest led several domaines to only pick grapes in the morning in 2020, as the baking heat of the afternoon was potentially too much to prudently bring in bunches and crush them. Claude and François de Nicolay at Domaine Chandon de Briailles had their picking teams only working in the mornings in 2020, starting at 7:00 AM and finishing by 1:00 PM each day, so as to make sure that they did not pick in the worst heat of the afternoons. Similarly, Jeremy Seysses at Domaine Dujac had the pickers getting rolling by 6:30 and finishing by 12:30 each day, so that bunches came into the winery at reasonable temperatures for crushing and the start of the fermentations. Elodie Michelot of Domaine Alain Michelot, did the same, observing that “if we had brought in grapes in the heat of the afternoon and crushed the bunches at such temperatures, the yeasts would have been far too active and as a result, we would have ended up with fermentations temperatures that would have been way, way too high and plenty of potential for volatility in the wines.” Of course, picking only in the morning means that the harvest is more drawn out, which leads to both complications keeping your picking teams together (as many may be contracted to be in another wine region soon after the harvest in Burgundy) and also risking the sugars continuing to rise in the bunches that remain out on the vine in the torrid temperatures. So, this was yet another trade-off that had to be decided upon by *vignerons*.

One of the things that defines the style of the vintage of 2020 is the acidity levels in the finished wines. There ended up being very little malic acid in the bunches in 2020, with most of the acidity being tartaric, so that malolactic fermentations ended up affecting overall levels of measured acidity in the wines very little. In fact, Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier noted that “we even had one or two cuvées whose measured acidities actually went up a tiny amount after the malo.” So both the reds and the whites of 2020 are quite shaped in personality by their excellent levels of acidity. And this is true of the red wines that are spot on in ripeness and those that are more powerful in personality, from earlier or later picking dates- they all have very good acids. In some cellars, the malolactic fermentations went very quickly, whereas in others, they were slow and only really finished up during the harvest of the 2021s. This varied widely depending on the cellar, and probably the temperatures of the wines during the cool summer of 2021. Bertrand Chevillon noted that “our malolactic fermentations finished up pretty much at a normal time in March of 2021, but that there was not a lot of malic acidity in the grapes in any case.” In contrast, Véronique Drouhin noted that the *maison’s* wines in 2020 “had very slow, sluggish malos during the summer of 2021 and many were only just finishing up in the autumn.” One can see these variations in the stage of development of many of the young 2020 reds that I tasted for this report, with many of the wines showing still quite primary even in the first two weeks of December. Of course, being three weeks later than my customary time to taste the wines out of cask also means that the temperatures of the cellar were starting to slowly descend a bit to winter levels, which also tends to shut the wines down a touch.

Most of my discussion of the vintage thus far has focused on the red wines of the Côte d’Or, where there is certainly a very wide range of styles in this vintage. The white wines of the Côte d’Or are far more homogenous in style in this vintage and, one has to say, probably even more successful. Part of the reason for this lies in the yields of the chardonnay being far less

affected by the drought conditions and tending to produce quite a normal size crop load in 2020, which ameliorates some of the wide stylistic permutations one finds in the reds, as there was simply not the same concentrating effects found in the chardonnays. So, the whites benefit from much more classical balances, the same bright, zesty acids as is found in the reds, and during my visit, the white wines tended to show far more of their underlying signatures of *terroir* out of cask than is the case with a significant percentage of the red wines, many of which are still very fruit-driven, sappy and quite primary in personality. My gut instinct is that the *terroir* will eventually emerge from under the copious quantity of fruit in these more adolescent wines, but it is going to take time. The white wines of the Côte d'Or, on the other hand, are already beautifully delineated, show off simply beautiful fruit tones, have lovely, classical structures for long-term aging and often such engaging personalities out of the blocks that seems highly likely that many will be drunk young, with great pleasure and not see their tenth birthdays. But, all in all, one has to conclude that 2020 is simply a marvelous, very classically-proportioned for the whites of the Côte d'Or.

As I mentioned above, the growing season in Chablis was quite different than was the case in the Côte d'Or, as a few timely rainstorms came through during the summer months and replenished water in the vineyards and kept the maturation process rolling along nicely all summer long. As Isabelle Raveneau noted, “we were lucky to have two or three big storms that brought plenty of rain, nicely spaced out over the summer, so that there was never really any major issues with hydric stress here in Chablis. “ Consequently, the crop was quite stress free in 2020 and yields were generally quite good, with most top *vignerons* reporting yields in the forty to forty-five hectoliters per hectare range, which Didier Séguier of Domaine William Fèvre noted “is exactly what we aim for- not too generous, but not too small, so that the wines stay true in style to Chablis and do not end up too concentrated from tiny crop levels.” As a result of the missing dynamic of hydric stress out in the vines during the summer in Chablis, the vintages is differently shaped than is the case further south in the Côte d'Or and one would have to term the 2020 crop in Chablis one that is absolutely classical in profile and very, very high in quality. From the examples I tasted of the 2020 Chablis, there is impressive consistency of both style and very high quality and there are no caveats needed here, which is not always the case further south in the Côte d'Or. While one can find absolutely stunning white wines at many addresses throughout the Côte de Beaune in 2020, it may well prove that when we look back on the vintage a decade down the road, we will come to think that Chablis was the very finest of the regions of Burgundy in this year.

Turning to the style of the red wines, let me first start a more focused discussion of the stylistic variations found in 2020. As noted above, all of the wines share a tangy, fine level of acidity, due to the high amount of tartaric acidity in the bunches in this year. While all the reds share this lovely level of acidity, which adds freshness to the fruit components and excellent backend lift and vibrancy to the wines, the bright acidity is probably the only universal element shared by red wines in this vintage. Stylistically, there is a very wide range of personalities to be found in the reds of 2020, often depending upon when the grapes were brought in and how severe the hydric stress and blocked maturation was out in the vines during the worst part of the long summer drought. Alcohol can vary quite a bit among the pinot noirs of 2020, with some domaines having collections that range from the high twelve percent range or just over 13.5 percent, and others well up over fourteen percent octane for all of their red wines. In general, the

higher alcohols are found in the wines made from grapes either brought in before the rains of the 23rd had worked their way up into the bunches (though there are strikingly low octane exceptions to this), or in the wines made from later-picked bunches and their much higher sugar levels brought about by the heat spike that coincided with harvest period in 2020. While there is some variation in alcohol levels within each domaine's range of red wines, as grand cru and premier cru parcels would have their bunches collected first, once the decision to start picking had been made, the far wider range of alcohol levels is seen from domaine to domaine, rather than from cru to cru, due to the timing of the picking. But, similarly to the vintage of 2018, the overall quality and balance of a given wine is not tied precisely to its alcohol level, as there are some superbly balanced red wines to be found in 2020 with alcohols at fourteen percent or even a bit more! And there are also svelte, more classically-proportioned 2020 reds that hover right around thirteen percent alcohol in this vintage.

What virtually every *vigneron* told me who made successful red wines in 2020 was that it was most important to be careful with extractions, so as to keep good, textural sophistication in the tannins in the finished wines. Most noted that they did not do any *pigeage* for their 2020s, preferring the far more gentle extraction method of gently pumping over juice on top to keep the cap moist during alcoholic fermentation, and all of these winegrowers noted that they were very happy that they had taken this course of action during fermentation. And the results are often some truly stunning young red Burgundies, and there is little doubt that a great many producers feel the 2020 vintage is a great, great year for red wines. As Denis Bachelet noted, "it is clear to me already that 2020 is one of the three greatest vintages of my career, with only my wines of 1999 and 2002 likely to reach the same level of quality." Similarly, Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier observed that "2020 is very clearly going to be a great vintage, but the wines are going to take a long, long time in the cellar before they are really ready to drink and start to show their greatness." As we were comparing the 2020s to the 2019s at the time of this conversation (and he has made some of the most beautiful 2019 reds that I tasted on my trip), he continued, "it depends- do you prefer a great vintage (2020) or a delicious vintage (2019) when adding red Burgundy to your cellar?" I look forward to discussing the 2019 vintage in far more detail in its own article, but keep in mind that the 2019 vintage may well be even more heterogeneous in style and quality than either 2018 or 2020- neither of which are paradigms of stylistic consistency!

So, when choosing which red wines to buy from this vintage, it is important to pay close attention to the ultimate style a domaine ended up producing in 2020, as there is a very wide range to choose from this year. There are deep, sappy wines that show very concentrated levels of black fruit, high, sharp acids and chewy tannins and are really very powerfully-styled wines. Then there are equally sappy wines, but with less overt concentration to their personalities, often with alcohols in the fourteen percent range, but with more classically inclined balances and great futures ahead of them. And then there are decidedly lower octane wines that are still even more classically-inclined, with their alcohol levels more closely aligned with typical vintages, ranging from thirteen to 13.5 percent or so, and with more svelte, less powerful personalities than some of the other, equally successful, but quite differently-styled wines in the more concentrated school of 2020. As I noted above, it was not only the time of picking that determined the stylistic bent of a given collection of red wines at a given domaine, as also issues of relative vine age, depth and type of soil, degree of slope of the parcel, and even the rootstock a given plot of vines

is planted on all contributed to how the pinot noir vines reacted to the drought conditions of 2020. As was the case strikingly in 2018 also, it certainly seemed that *vignerons* farming biodynamically had plants that adapted better the extreme drought conditions of 2020. Where hydric stress was a most pressing problem, the red wines have often ended up the most concentrated, as the need to get the tannins across the finish line to physiological maturity has often dictated that one has been forced to let the sugars climb higher than ideally necessary. The wines made from the most severely drought-afflicted vines are also often the most tannic in personality.



A colorful, welcoming rooster in the tasting room at Domaine Taupenot-Merme.

I should also mention that the relative style of the red wines from domaine to domaine in 2020 is not going to be an issue at all for those who are not buying their red Burgundies for drinking pleasure down the road, but are buying them for investment. The growing phenomenon of wine arbitrage for Burgundy is something that is now widely known among winegrowers in the region and not thought of with any degree of fondness. As Raphael Coche commented during my visit, “the continuing rise of prices for Burgundy and the growing number of people who are buying these wines for financial speculation, rather than to drink, is a very serious problem for the region and something we need to think about, as its long-term effects for the market will not be good.” This sentiment was shared by several other *vignerons*, who fear that the Grands Crus of the Côte d’Or may well end up being much like the First Growths of Bordeaux a few years

down the road- depending on financial speculators to purchase the wines and salt them away to trade as commodities, rather than purchased by people who actually plan to drink and enjoy the wines. The rather absurdly high prices just realized for the wines of the Hospices de Beaune from the 2021 vintage was remarked upon quite often during my visits with producers, who wonder where all of this will end and do not foresee a good final destination for the Burgundy market in the not too distant future. So, if you are in the wine arbitrage game, I would at least not publicize this fact too widely to producers, as there is very real concern with how this practice is adversely affecting the market for Burgundy today.

The white wines of the Côte d'Or in 2020 have turned out remarkably well in this vintage and are really a step up from many (but not all) of the red wines to be found in the year. I am not really sure why the drought seems to have affected the chardonnay so much less than the pinot noir in this vintage, as one finds the same variations of chalk and clay in the soils, the same variations of slope and age of vines, but it is quite clear that the chardonnay grape withstood the issues of hydric stress far better than was the case with pinot noir in 2020. This can clearly be seen simply on the subject of yields between the two grapes, as most white wine vineyards produced crop levels that are considered quite "correct" by *vignerons*, generally ranging between thirty-five and fifty hectoliters per hectare, depending on the appellation of a given parcel. And the style of the white wines in the Côte de Beaune is far more homogenous across bottlings and collections at domaines where I tasted than is the case with red wine portfolios. The more normal yields have delivered white wines of far more classical balances between fruit, minerality and acidity in the finished wines, and so many 2020 white Burgundies simply exude charm and vibrant energy. It is really a superb vintage for white Burgundy! As chardonnay tends to be picked ahead of pinot noir in the Côte d'Or in virtually every year, there was not always the opportunity to benefit from the rains that fell on the 23rd of August, though many of the producers with whom I tasted echoed the picking dates of Alexandre Moreau in Chassagne-Montrachet, who picked between August 20th and August 30th in this vintage. So, he did have the showers fall during the course of his picking, with the precipitation that fell perhaps offsetting some of the sugar accumulation that was occurring under the very hot temperatures that fell upon the Burgundy region in the second half of August of 2020.

In any event, at least at the domaines I visited, the range of 2020 white Burgundies is really quite lovely. The wines have beautiful depth, really bright, crunchy fruit tones of perfect ripeness, fine minerality and those bright, zesty acids from the high level of tartaric acid that was found in the bunches in this vintage. Véronique Drouhin commented that "many of the white wines of 2020 have excellent acidity that seems to recall the wines of 2014, but with even better fruit tones and depth, so it is really an excellent year for the chardonnays." There is little doubt that the whites of 2020 have the potential for a long and graceful evolution in bottle and that this would be a vintage of long-distance runners in the cellar, if premature oxidation was not still a concern. But, of course, it remains a threat for very long aging of white Burgundies (and plenty of other regions around the globe), so the fact that so many of the 2020 whites also look likely to drink splendidly well in their relative youths is yet another factor in their favor. Unlike a more stern, high acid vintage out of the blocks like 1996, the 2020 whites in the Côte de Beaune do not seem likely to close up significantly after bottling and they should prove to be tremendously satisfying wines to drink when they are still relatively youthful. As Simon Rollin of the fine Domaine Rollin Père et Fils in Pernand-Vergelesses observed, "there is no doubt in my mind that

2020 is a great, great year for the white wines, as they have the excellent acidity we found in 2014, but even better maturity to the fruit- they will live a long time in bottle if we do not drink them too soon!”

As I mentioned above, the 2020 vintage in Chablis is just a bit different than was the case for the whites in the Côte d’Or in this vintage, as there was simply no issue of hydric stress to work around and this is probably my favorite region this year (by a small margin). It is not only that there is far more consistency of excellence from domaine to domaine and wine to wine in 2020, as the wines are utterly classical in personality, brimming with beautifully ripe, crunchy fruit tones and superb expressions of underlying minerality, but they are also beautifully proportioned on the palate and alive with zesty acidity. It will be a vintage in Chablis that has the potential for very long-term aging (though premox will of course claim its share of bottles along the way) and though the wines show every facet of their inherent complexity right out of the blocks, the 2020s are going to be wines that repay cellaring quite handsomely and it will be a vintage where it pays splendid dividends to be patient and really let the wines blossom completely. The 2019s in Chablis, which I prefer stylistically to the 2018s, will be the more forward vintage for early drinking and one will be very well-served to buy both vintages and plan to drink the 2019s (which also have quite good acidity and underlying mineral drive) while allowing the 2020s to reach their future celestial levels with a bit of extended bottle age. As this report is already going to be quite long, I will keep back the discussion of the 2019s in Chablis for the article on the 2019 vintage in the next issue, but suffice to say that there are really some strong examples of the 2019 vintage to be found in the region and no one will be disappointed to drink some of the top 2019s while waiting for the 2020s to add even more layers of complexity with a bit of time in the cellar.

The following notes are arranged, as is my custom for these long vintage reports, with the regions listed from north to south, starting with Chablis and working down to Chassagne-Montrachet (I did not get to see anyone in Saint-Aubin on this trip). As I mentioned above, the pandemic continues on in December of 2020 and Covid cast quite a considerable shadow over my trip this year, as I had several appointments cancelled because of positive tests just in advance of my visits. Happily, fully ninety percent of the population of France is vaccinated, so one hopes that those who have contracted Covid were not seriously ill from the virus. Consequently, because of positive Covid tests among *vignerons* or their winery teams, or contact tracing issues, I was not able to taste at Domaine Louis Michel et Fils in Chablis, Domaine Georges Roumier in Chambolle-Musigny, Domaine Antoine Jobard in Meursault or Domaine Sauzet in Puligny-Montrachet during this visit. It was also not possible to taste with Louis-Michel Liger-Belair in Vosne-Romanée, as he had a last second scheduling conflict that precluded keeping our rendez-vous, and I also had to cancel my appointment with Jean-Marie Fourrier on this trip, as the last second changes to US policy regarding pre-flight Covid testing within twenty-four hours of departure meant I had to be at the pharmacy in Beaune getting my rapid PCR test when I should have been in Gevrey working through Jean-Marie’s 2020s! Cécile Tremblay also had to reschedule our tasting for next March, as was the case with Céline Fontaine of Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard, so despite the length of this report, there are a lot of domaines that are normally part of my end of the year visit to the region that do not appear in the pages that follow. Such is our age of pandemic.

I should mention that I tasted a lot of 2019 Burgundies as well on this trip, but the majority of these notes I will publish in Issue 97 in February, as to try and include them in this issue would make it well over two hundred pages in length and rather unwieldy. The only exceptions to this are that I have included my notes on the 2019s from Domaine Joseph Roty and Domaine Coche-Dury, as it is the custom of both *vignerons* to prefer to show their wines after they are bottled and recovered from the *mise*, so my notes on their wines are typically one vintage behind my reports on other domaines in the region. I will also include these notes from Domaines Roty and Coche-Dury on their 2019s in the report in the next issue on the 2019 Burgundy vintage, just to make it easier to locate them a year or two down the road, for folks who may wish to refresh their memories about either domaines' wines from this vintage. As both made truly stunning examples of the 2019 vintage, the inclusion of these notes will hardly be out of place when reporting on the excellent 2020 vintage. So, here is the report on the 2020 vintage in Burgundy, which is stellar for white wines (at least at the estates that I visited on this trip) and often brilliant for red wines as well, but far more inconsistent in style and (sometimes) quality.

Chablis

Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin (La Chapelle Vaupelteigne)

Jean-Claude and Romain Bessin have another absolutely superb set of wines resting in their cellars from the 2020 vintage. At the time of my visit on December 7th, the 2020 Chablis AC and the Chablis "Vieilles Vignes" cuvées had been in bottle for only one week, and so were a bit unsettled still post-bottling, but the rest of the range was still in tank prior to bottling early next year and was absolutely singing. The Bessin family began picking on August 27th in 2020, which made it the earliest start to a harvest in the history of the domaine. But, despite the early start to picking, the wines are utterly classical in style, with bright "crunchy" fruit, to use Romain's description, superb soil signatures and classical size and balance. Romain Bessin reports that all of the 2020s have quite correct alcohol levels in 2020, despite all of the sunshine and heat spikes during the growing season, as the wines range from 12.5 to thirteen percent in this vintage. He notes that "this is in contrast to 2019, where the range runs from thirteen to 13.5 percent." Yields here were quite classic as well, ranging from forty to forty-five hectoliters per hectare, which is better than 2019 and way above 2021, where the crop will be down anywhere from fifty to seventy-five percent, depending on the frost damage to each parcel in 2021. But, that is a story for next year and there is no reason to temper one's enthusiasm for these beautiful 2020s by looking past them to the more difficult vintage of 2021 waiting in the wings. For now, we have these truly stunning wines entering into the pipeline in the coming months, and in meaningful quantities, so take this opportunity to stock up on what are going to be cellar treasures five to ten years down the road!

2020 Chablis- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

Not surprisingly, having only been in bottle for one week, the 2020 Chablis AC from Domaine Bessin is a little shaken up post-bottling, but it is also abundantly clear that there is excellent depth and transparency here, coupled to lovely acidity and plenty of length and grip. Based on how well the wines that were still in tank showed, I have zero doubt that this wine too will deliver lovely precision and focus as well, once it has recovered from the *mise*. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with excellent material at the core, fine mineral undertow, zesty acids and impressive length and grip. The focus will

snap back here once it recovers from the bottling and will be a lovely bottle of AC. 2022-2040+. **90-91.**

2020 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The 2020 Vieilles Vignes cuvée seems to have recovered a bit better from the bottling than the straight *villages*, but this may simply be a reflection of the superior depth and elegance of the old vines weighing in here. In any case, this is going to be an excellent bottle and a superb value this year, as it offers up a very promising bouquet of pear, tangerine, fruit blossoms, a lovely, almost flinty sense of chalky minerality and a hint of the beeswax to come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full, with a lovely core, superb mineral drive and grip, bright tangy acids and a long, nascently complex finish. This is clearly going to be outstanding with a few years’ worth of bottle age. 2024-2050. **91-92.**

2020 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The premier and grand crus *chez* Bessin were still in tank at the time of my visit, so no need for interpolation because of bottling. The 2020 Montmains is a stellar bottle in the making, delivering a vibrant aromatic constellation of lemon, pear, wet stone minerality, a touch of citrus peel, oyster shell and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully transparent in personality, with a fine core of pristine fruit, lovely, seamless acids and great focus and grip on the long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2024-2060. **92+.**



Romaine Bessin outside of the family’s cellars in the village of La Chapelle Vaupelteigne.

2020 Chablis “La Forêt”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The Bessin family’s 2020 La Forêt is also a superb wine in waiting, but it is more reserved today on the palate than the Montmains and will clearly want a bit longer in the cellar before drinking. The bouquet however, is quite expressive at the present time, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, white lilies, chalky soil tones, beeswax, lime peel and just a touch of iodine in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with a lovely core, excellent soil signature, bright acids and superb balance and grip on the long, properly reserved finish. All this beautiful wine needs is some bottle age! 2026-2060+. **93.**

2020 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The *typicité* of the 2020 vintage is so clearly apparent in the Bessin’s cellars this year, and I would be happy to submit their ’20 Fourchaume as the perfect expression of this *terroir* to wine lovers who are not already familiar with it, as it is an absolute classic example. The bouquet is pure and very, very precise out of the blocks, offering up scents of pear, apple, wet stone minerality, dried flowers, just a whisper of smokiness and a lovely topnote of what I have always called Fourchaume’s “woody” character. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with lovely depth at the core, fine focus and grip, a lovely foundation of minerality and a long, bright and zesty finish. The girdle of acidity here is lovely. Fine juice. 2025-2060+. **93.**

2020 Chablis “La Pièce au Comte”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The special old vine bottling of Fourchaume, which the Bessin family labels as La Pièce au Comte”, is absolutely splendid in 2020. The bouquet is beautifully detailed right out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a lovely mix of fresh lime, pear, apple, wet stone minerality, a gentle touch of Fourchaume “woodsiness”, incipient notes of beeswax and a lovely floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely tensile, with superb purity and focus, a crunchy core of fruit and fine mineral drive on the long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is so good! 2027-2060+. **94.**

2020 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The Bessin family’s bottling of Valmur is equally stellar in the 2020 vintage. The bouquet is deep, multi-faceted and still fairly youthful in its composure, delivering scents of lemon, pear, apple, a lovely base of chalky minerality, beeswax, dried flowers and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, laser-like and full, with a rock solid core, excellent precision and grip, tons of backend minerality and a very long, zesty and chiseled finish. This is still a puppy and I may be understating the distance in quality between it and the premier crus here this year a tad, as this is still in the process of unfolding its many layers. So, do not be surprised if its score creeps up again a few years down the line. It is a beautiful young bottle of Valmur. 2030-2080. **95+.**

Domaine Dampf Frères (Collan)

I did not get a chance to visit the Dampf brothers on my recent trip, as my schedule was tight and I had a lot of ground to cover after two years’ absence from the region. However, I have liked their wines very much that I have tasted out of bottle here in New York from the last few vintages and hope to have a chance to visit and taste in their cellars on one of my upcoming trips. In the meantime, their importer, Bradley Cohen, kindly sent me samples of a couple of newly-arrived wines from the domaine just before my departure for Burgundy at the end of November, so I do have one note on really good wine from this fine domaine in the 2020 vintage.

2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “le Clos du Château”- Dampf Frères (Chablis)

The 2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “le Clos du Château” from Dampf Frères is a lovely wine, which clearly benefits from its *elevage* in older oak casks. The wine delivers a deep and complex bouquet of apple, orange zest, a touch of paraffin, a beautiful base of oyster shell limestone and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, ripe and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive, zesty acids and a long, complex and quite impressive finish. This has to be one of the best Bourgogne Blanc bottlings made in Chablis these days! 2022-2030. **90.**

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat (Chablis)

Vincent Dauvissat has made truly stunning wines in the 2020 vintage, which he terms “very good and very Chablis in personality, with fine minerality and excellent acidity.” The 2020 vintage was the earliest harvest ever at Domaine Dauvissat, with the grapes having all been collected by August 31st of this year, which was the first time any vintage’s picking had been finished in the month of August! Yields are “correct” according to Monsieur Dauvissat, and as he noted, since the flowering was so early in this year, the date of harvest was not all that surprising. What he found was a bit surprising, given that it had been a “solar vintage” in 2020 was how beautifully classic the wines have turned out, which was for him a bit of a pleasant surprise, given the really blazing heat at times during the summer and the very warm temperatures at the time of picking. But, one has the sense when talking to Vincent Dauvissat these days that he is always content with what Mother Nature gives him each year, as his philosophy is that if one works hard in the vineyards each season, it is very rare that one does not end up with at least very interesting wines when all is said and done, no matter how challenging a particular growing season may be. The myriad of difficulties that were the essence of the summer of 2021 may well put that maxim to the test, but one has a sense that though the yields will be short for the 2021s, Monsieur Dauvissat is already a bit sanguine about the potential of the wines. But, that will be a story for next year. The 2020 Petit Chablis was the only wine that had already been bottled at the time of my visit in early December, with this wine having witnessed its mise in late September of 2021, but the rest of the wines were still not bottled. The Chablis villages and all the premier crus had been racked into tank for eventual bottling soon into the New Year, and the two dazzling 2020 grand crus were still resting comfortably in cask. 2020 will be yet another truly stunning vintage chez Dauvissat. This is the kind of svelte, tightly-knit vintage here that starts out fairly tight and precise, but blossoms and seemingly puts on weight with bottle age and will eventually end up being judged as one of the greatest years in the long and illustrious career of Vincent Dauvissat. If you love Chablis, do not miss them!

2020 Petit Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 Petit Chablis is really a lovely wine and was showing impeccably well for only having been bottled two months or so ahead of my visit. The bouquet is bright, complex and expressive, offering up scents of apple, pear, beeswax, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, pure and full, with a lovely core, fine soil undertow, zesty acids and a long, complex and wide open finish. This is really good wine. 2022-2035. **90.**

2020 Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The Dauvissat family’s 2020 Chablis AC is also excellent, showing of the purity of the vintage on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a stylish blend of

lemon, pear, a lovely base of limestone, just a touch of iodine and a topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and vibrant, with a fine core, excellent wet stone mineral drive, bright acids and impeccable balance on the long, focused and complex finish. This has a bit more mid-palate depth than the Petit Chablis and will have a far longer shelf life. Fine juice. 2024-2045. **91.**

2020 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 Chablis “Séchet” from Vincent Dauvissat is very refined this year, showing the classical proportions of the vintage to very fine effect. It delivers an aromatic constellation of green apple, lemon, a beautiful base of chalky soil and oyster shell, spring flowers and a lovely topnote of beeswax. Pure, full and racy on the palate, the Séchet shows off exemplary depth at the core, excellent focus and cut and an impeccably balanced, but still quite closed personality on the long finish. This is going to be an outstanding bottle, but it will demand just a bit of patience to allow it to properly blossom. 2026-2060. **93.**

2020 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 Vaillons from Monsieur Dauvissat is just as beautifully structured out of the blocks as the Séchet, sharing that same classical sense of balance and reserve, so it too will deserve just a few years of hibernation in the cellar before starting to drink with generosity. But, the potential here is enormous, as the wine offers up a fine bouquet of apple, pear, chalky minerality, white lilies, citrus peel and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, precise and full, with a rock solid core, beautiful acidity and mineral drive, impeccable balance and a long, focused and nascently complex finish. 2026-2060. **93+.**

2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 Montée de Tonnerre from Domaine Dauvissat is extremely refined in personality this year, which is perfectly appropriate of a great *terroir* in a top flight vintage. The nose delivers a very elegant blend of fresh lime, , pear, a complex base of limestone, beeswax, orange blossoms and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, svelte and full-bodied, with racy acids, laser-like focus, a lovely core of fruit and stunning, seamless balance on the long, complex and truly beautiful finish. This wine closes with impressive lift and finishing notes of lime peel and beeswax. It has outstanding potential, but like the other premier crus in the cellars this year, give it at least four years or so in the cellar before opening bottles in earnest, as it has much more to show with a bit of bottle age. 2026-2060. **94.**

2020 Chablis “la Forest”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 la Forest from Vincent Dauvissat is truly outstanding this year and reminds me very much of the great potential I saw when I first tasted vintages like 1985 and 1990 here, which also were so classically-cut out of the blocks. The superb aromatic constellation delivers scents of apple, pear, lemon, a beautiful base of chalky minerality, paraffin, vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote that shares a mix of white lilies and lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with impeccable focus and grip, a lovely core of fruit, outstanding soil undertow and a long, zesty and finish that closes with snappy acids and a complex, seamless finish. A classic in the making. 2026-2065. **94+.**

2020 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

I often think that perhaps I have underrated the Dauvissat premier crus in the cellars at this time of year, after they have been assembled in tank, once I get to the grand crus that are still resting in cask and still showing each and every facet of their beauty. The 2020 les Preuses is a stunning wine *chez* Dauvissat, offering up a youthful and breathtaking nose of lemon, a touch of sweet grapefruit, pear, chalky, oyster shell, iodine, orange zest, a hint of paraffin and vanillin

oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and racy in personality, with a stunning core of fruit, a kaleidoscope of supporting minerality, snappy acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, very complex finish of simply perfect balance. Magic. 2032-2085+. **97+**.

2020 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2020 les Clos from Monsieur Dauvissat is every bit as brilliant as the les Preuses. The nose soars from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, lime zest, a stunning base of flinty, chalky, wet stone minerality and oyster shell, vanillin oak and a topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off a gorgeous core of fruit, but the real beauty here is in the stunningly complex base of minerality, coupled with vibrant acids, impeccable focus and grip and a very, very long, dancing and seamlessly balanced finish. A stunning wine in the making. 2032-2085. **98**.

Domaine William Fèvre (Chablis)

Didier Séguier and his team of harvesters were out in the vines starting on August 25th in 2020, which was exactly the same date he started picking in the blazing summer of 2003. Other than the dates of harvest, there was happily no other similarities between the 2020s at Domaine William Fèvre and the 2003s, as these 2020s are absolutely classical in profile- pure, snappy and precise in their expression of fruit tones, coupled to laser-like minerality. As is customary at this time of the year at Domaine Fèvre, the Petit Chablis and the two Chablis villages bottlings had been bottled in early September, with everything else already assembled into tank for bottling in the spring. The yields here were “exactly what we look for” according to Didier, averaging between forty and forty-five hectoliters per hectare, “which is not too generous and not too concentrated and produces wines with plenty of minerality- true Chablis.” And these are indeed “true Chablis”, with gorgeous, snappy fruit tones and just brimming over with the signatures of their underlying terroir. They have the beautiful acids of the vintage and look likely to last long in bottle, with great evolution taking place as the years go by. They remind me a bit stylistically of the beautiful 2000s here, which I drank in copious quantities back in the day (as the wines were a bit more “under the radar” back then and easier to buy in depth for the cellar). When I was tasting with Patrick Piuze a couple of days later, he asked me who I had visited in Chablis earlier in the week and when I mentioned Didier at Domaine Fèvre as amongst my earlier appointments, Patrick commented that “the region of Chablis is so lucky to have Didier at Domaine Fèvre, as it is really important for one of the big houses to have a great winemaker in charge and to turn out such a superb range of wines every year.” It is too early to say with any certainty, but it seems likely that when one looks back on Didier Séguier’s fine career at the helm of Domaine William Fèvre, we may well regard his 2020s as one of his finest two or three vintages!

2020 Petit Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Petit Chablis from Domaine William Fèvre was showing quite nicely at the time of my visit, having recovered from its September *mise*. The bouquet offers up scents of pear, lemon, bee pollen, a nice base of chalk and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and really has a lovely core of fruit this year, with zesty acids, fine focus and grip and a long, classy finish. Fine value. 2022-2035. **89**.

2020 Chablis “Champs Royaux”- Maison William Fèvre

The 2020 Champs Royaux is another very tasty bottle this year, but it is not a notable step up in quality from the excellent Petit Chablis. The bouquet is quite pretty, delivering a mix of green apple, lime, chalky soil tones, straw and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is

bright, full-bodied and still a bit reserved post-bottling, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, zesty and well-balanced finish. Perhaps it will put a bit more distance between itself and the Petit Chablis with a bit more bottle age, but this very good wine simply underscores just how good the Petit Chablis has turned out as well in 2020. 2022-2035. **89+**.

2020 Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

This the Chablis *villages* bottling made from Domaine Fèvre's own vineyards and it is always a step up from the Champs Royaux. The 2020 is a lovely example of the vintage, with the nose wafting from the glass in a precise blend of lime, green apple, limestone minerality, oyster shell and a nice dollop of dried flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, excellent mineral undertow and cut, vibrant acids and a long, very classy finish. First class AC. 2024-2045. **91**.

2020 Chablis "Beuroy"- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Beuroy from Domaine Fèvre is a fine bottle in the making. This is a warmer microclimate and Didier noted that they picked this very early, "to keep the freshness in the wine." The team has succeeded nicely in this, as the wine jumps from the glass in a lovely blend of lemon, pear, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a touch of upper register paraffin. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a good core, lovely transparency and grip and a long, zesty and complex finish. Good juice. 2026-2055. **92**.

2020 Chablis "Montmains"- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Montmains here is also lovely, with perhaps just a bit more definition and complexity than in the Beuroy. The nose is pure and bright, offering up scents of apple, tart orange, wet stone minerality, citrus peel, dried flowers and a nice shading of oyster shell. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and racy in personality, with fine focus and grip, a lovely core and a long, minerally and beautifully balanced finish. A lovely example. 2026-2055+. **92+**.

2020 Chablis "Vaillons"- Domaine William Fèvre

I really love the size and shape of the 2020 Fèvre Vaillons, which deliver lovely detail in its complex aromatic constellation of lime, green apple, a touch of tangerine, beeswax, limestone minerality and a topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, snappy and focused, with an excellent core, superb balance and complexity and a very long, vibrant and classy finish. Excellent juice. 2026-2055+. **93**.

2020 Chablis "Les Lys"- Domaine William Fèvre

In the stellar lineup of premier crus at Domaine William Fèvre, the Les Lys bottling is always one of my sentimental favorites, as one does not get to taste top flight examples of this Left Bank *terroir* all that often. The 2020 Les Lys delivers a beautiful young nose of lemon, lime, pear, white lilies, bee pollen, a touch of anise and a marvelously complex base of limestone. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and racy, with beautiful precision on the attack, a superb core of fruit, fine mineral undertow and a long, snappy and laser-like finish. First class Chablis. 2027-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chablis "Mont de Milieu"- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 will be the last vintage of Mont de Milieu at Domaine Fèvre for quite a few years, as these old vines were grubbed up after this vintage and will not be replanted for a couple more years, and then their production will go into the Chablis AC cuvée for some time after that. However, the wine has certainly chosen a fine vintage with which to let the curtain fall for the time being, as it delivers a superb nose of lemon, tangerine, pear, paraffin, a fine base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and classy, with a lovely core, excellent transparency, bright acids and fine balance and grip on

the long and classy finish. I like the backend tension here very much, which augurs well for its evolution in bottle. 2026-2055+. **92+**.

2020 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine William Fèvre

There are two different bottlings of Fourchaume in the Fèvre cellars this year, with this one made from purchased fruit. It is a very good bottle, delivering a fine bouquet of apple, pink grapefruit, orange, fine soil tones, a touch of salinity and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a good core of fruit, bouncy acids and a long, forward and juicy finish. This has a good girdle of acidity, but it is a bit more forward in personality than the domaine’s own premier cru bottlings. 2024-2055. **92**.



Didier Séguier, looking like a “proud papa” after presenting his stunning lineup of 2020s at Domaine Fèvre.

2020 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine William Fèvre (Domaine vines)

The Fourchaume from the estate’s own holdings in Fourchaume (all of which lie in Vaulorent) is a notable step up in the 2020 vintage from the bottling made from purchased fruit. The nose is pure, deep and precise, delivering scents of pear, apple, lime blossoms, just a touch of paraffin, spring flowers and a very complex base of limestone minerality. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, racy and rock solid at the core, with a bit more of a reserved personality than the above wine, but more backend lift, cut and grip. This wine has great focus and balance and will be stunning once it starts to blossom in four or five years. 2026-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine William Fèvre

Domaine Fèvre’s 2020 Montée de Tonnerre is another excellent young premier cru. The bouquet is bright, complex and piercing in its precision, jumping from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, tart orange, gorgeously complex, salty minerality, citrus peel and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is racy, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a great girdle of acidity, superb mineral drive and cut and a very long, complex and youthful finish. Great juice in the making. 2027-2065. **94+**.

2020 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine William Fèvre

I am always impressed that Didier Séguier chooses to only bottle the finest parcels of old vines in Vaulorent under that label, with the remainder of the domaine’s holdings being bottled under a Fourchaume label. But, when one tastes this hard on the heels of the very fine Fourchaume domaine wine, one can see that these old vines are a step up in quality. The bouquet of the 2020 Vaulorent jumps from the glass in a stunning blend of pear, apple, tart orange, lemon zesty, a kaleidoscopic base of limestone minerality, a touch of anise and a floral topnote redolent of white lilies. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb mineral drive and cut, snappy acids and great balance on the long and zesty finish. Great juice. 2027-2065. **94+**.

2020 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Chablis “Bougros” from Domaine William Fèvre is a beautiful wine, and as is often the case in the lineup here, this is the most forward of the grand crus and the one I would reach to first if I had a desire to drink a delicious, younger grand cru. The bouquet is just loaded with beautifully pure fruit tones, with scents of pear, lime and green apple blending with notes of chalky soil tones, dried flowers and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and long, with a gorgeous core of fruit, fine chalky undertow, bright, zesty acids and great focus and grip on the long, complex finish. This still deserves some bottle age, but it will not be a crime to let your curiosity get the best of you and open a bottle of this lovely wine four or five years down the road! 2026-2065+. **94**.

2020 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine William Fèvre

Domaine Fèvre’s 2020 Vaudésir is another beautiful bottle in the making, but this is more reserved in personality out of the blocks than the Bougros and will demand a bit more cellaring before it starts to stir. The aromatic constellation is precise and minerally, offering up scents of apple, pear, lime peel, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and racy, with a rock solid core of fruit, impeccable balance and grip, lovely mineral drive and a long, focused and very promising finish. 2030-2075. **94+**.

2020 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Valmur from Domaine Fèvre is also an absolute classic in the making. The wine delivers a superb bouquet of apple, pear, beeswax, a complex base of limestone minerality, white lilies, fruit blossoms and a topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a properly reserved personality out of the blocks, great depth at the core, magical soil signature and a long, vibrant and snappy finish of excellent balance and grip. This is even a bit more structured than the Vaudésir and will need plenty of bottle age, but it will be stellar when it is truly ready to drink. 2032-2080. **95**.

2020 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 les Preuses from Domaine Fèvre was one of the finest white wines I tasted from the entire vintage during my trip in November and December. The perfect ripeness of the vintage, coupled to such great acidity are the hallmarks of the best wines of 2020 and these attributes are on full display in this stunning young wine. The nose soars from the glass in a mineral bath of les Preuses Kimmeridgian limestone *terroir*, carrying notes of apple, pear, fresh lime, straw, oyster shell, white flowers and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, precise, snappy and very, very complex, with great depth at the core, stunning mineral definition, laser-like focus and stunning length and grip on the simply beautiful young finish. All this great wine needs is time in the cellar to blossom. 2031-2080. **97.**

2020 Chablis “Bougros- “Côte de Bouguerots”- Domaine William Fèvre

The 2020 Côte de Bouguerots is every bit as brilliant as the les Preuses in this vintage at Domaine Fèvre. The wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and impeccably balanced, with bottomless depth at the core, gorgeous mineral undertow, racy acids and a long, precise and perfectly balanced finish. The bouquet is young, but already stunning, as it delivers scents of pear, a touch of passion fruit, delicious apple, beeswax, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, fruit blossoms and just a touch of paraffin in the upper register. This wine has everything one could ever ask for in a great, great example of grand cru Chablis. 2031-2080. **97.**

2020 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine William Fèvre

Choosing a favorite among the last three grand crus in the Domaine Fèvre lineup is simply impossible in 2020. The les Clos is yet another stunning young wine, offering up a refined and complex bouquet of pear, tart orange, fresh lime, flinty, chalky minerality, citrus peel, dried flowers and a nice touch of smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and seamlessly balanced, with a beautiful harness of acidity, a great core of fruit and a very long, very minerally and oh, so complex young finish. A great wine by any measure! 2032-2080. **97.**

Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen (Chablis)

Céline and Frédéric Gueguen have opened up a lovely new shop right across the street from the store of Domaine William Fèvre, and so I had a very easy time visiting and tasting with the couple's range of 2020s. As readers may recall from my coverage of Chablis several years ago, Céline is one of the Brocard children of Domaine Jean-Marc Brocard, which is located in the village of Préhy. Domaine Brocard is one of the very big domaines in the region and their vineyard largesse is rather incredible. When I first met Céline and her husband Frédéric, they were working at the family domaine out in Préhy, with Frédéric Gueguen in charge of all the family's vineyards. The couple made a tiny amount of wine under their own label as well back then, from small parcels of vineyards that Frédéric had from his own family. It was a heady time at Domaine Brocard, as Patrick Piuze was the winemaker there at that time. However, some family generational transitions are not harmonious, and though I do not know the exact details of what happened, Céline's brother Julien eventually took over direction at Domaine Brocard, Patrick Piuze departed and Céline and Frédéric were also pushed out on their own. That was a while ago now and my reasons for visiting and tasting at Domaine Brocard were pushed out with them.



In any case, Céline and Frédéric have been able to piece together a small domaine of their own since those days, with several of their vineyard parcels hailing from Céline's grandparents and also located out in the direction of Préhy, but one has the sense that justice was not done to the couple, though perhaps everything was arranged far more amicably than I remember. I very much like the style of the Domaine Gueguen wines, which are deep, complex, zesty and minerally-infused, but also often show a gentle leesiness (perhaps from a touch of battonage?) to their personalities when young. Beyond the wines listed below, the couple is also now producing a grand cru Bougros, made from purchased grapes, but this was still in cask from the 2020 vintage and I did not have the opportunity to taste it during my visit to the shop.

2020 Saint-Bris “Curiosité de Bourgogne”- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The 2020 Saint-Bris from Domaine Gueguen is an excellent bottle of sauvignon blanc. It was bottled in March of 2021 and was showing very well at the time of my visit, offering up a bright and complex nose of gooseberry, green apple, chalky minerality, fresh-cut grass and a topnote of lime peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and very nicely balanced, with fine cut and grip and a long, classic finish. This is a lovely example of this underrated source for sauvignon blanc. 2022-2030. **89.**

2020 Bourgogne Aligoté “la Vigne de Marie-Louise”- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The Bourgogne Aligoté “la Vigne de Marie-Louise” is named for Céline's grandmother, from whom this parcel of vines was bequeathed. These vines are also located in Saint-Bris and were planted in 1965. The 2020 version is complex and vibrant in personality, offering up a bouquet of apple, citrus peel, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, long and full-bodied, with very pretty fruit, lovely soil undertow, zesty acids and a long, well-balanced and complex finish. This is excellent aligoté. 2022-2033. **89.**

2020 Bourgogne Chardonnay- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The couple's Bourgogne vines are also located in Préhy and fall just outside the boundaries for Chablis *villages* ranking. This is a very lovely wine in 2020 and an excellent

value, as it is probably as good as a significant percentage of other estate's Chablis AC bottlings. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a fine mix of lemon, pear, chalky minerality, dried flowers and a touch of straw. On the palate the wine is zesty, full-bodied, focused and complex, with good mineral drive and grip, lovely balance and a long, bouncy finish. Good juice. 2022-2035. **90.**

2020 Petit Chablis- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

Domaine Gueguen's Petit Chablis vines are once again located in the village of Préhy and the 2020 version was really singing at the time of my visit. The wine offers up a bright aromatic constellation of pear, apple, oyster shell, white lilies and orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and very much defined by its underlying minerality, with a good core, just a whisper of leanness, bright acids and a long, complex finish that closes with a classic note of oyster shell. A fine example. 2022-2040. **90.**

2020 Chablis- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The 2020 Chablis *villages* is a very pretty wine as well from the Gueguens, but with a more fruit-driven personality than the very minerally Petit Chablis this year. The nose offers up a lovely spread of ripe pear and apple, beeswax, a lovely foundation of limestone and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and quite wide open in personality, with good acids and cut and a long, vibrant finish. Good juice. 2022-2040. **90.**

2020 Chablis "Cuvée 1975"- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The Cuvée 1975, as the name implies, is the family's old vine bottling from vines planted in '75. The 2020 version is excellent, delivering a deep, bright and full-bodied palate impression, with crisp acids, a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and impeccable balance on the long and zesty finish. The bouquet is utterly captivating, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, tangerine, lime zest, chalky minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. This is a lovely bottle and a fine, fine value, but it deserves a couple of years in the cellar to fully blossom before having at it in earnest. 2025-2050. **91.**

2020 Chablis "Vosgros"- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The Vosgros is one of Domaine Gueguen's two premier cru bottlings and it is lovely in 2020. The nose is bright and focused, delivering a mix of apple, pear, a touch of orange, a dollop of leesy tones, dried flowers, a beautiful base of oyster shell minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate is bright, focused and full, with an excellent core, lovely soil signature, a racy girdle of acidity and a long, nascently complex and impeccably balanced finish. A lovely bottle in the making. 2024-2055. **92.**

2020 Chablis "Vaucoupin"- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The 2020 Vaucoupin from Céline and Frédéric Gueguen is another excellent premier cru. The nose is pure and zesty, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of lemon, pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones that show a lovely touch of salinity, straw and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very minerally in personality, with a superb core, lovely focus and balance and a long, vibrant and promising finish. Give this a couple of years in the cellar to properly blossom. 2025-2055+. **92+.**

2019 Irancy Rouge- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The 2019 Irancy Rouge from Domaine Gueguen is a good, honest bottle of pinot noir in the making. It is still a bit tight out of the blocks and needs a bit of cellaring time to relax structurally, but there is good potential here. The bouquet is black fruity, offering up scents of dark berries, espresso, woodsmoke, gamebird and plenty of limestone. On the palate the wine is

vibrant, fullish and tightly-knit today, with a good core, fine mineral drive, moderate tannins and a long, youthful finish. This will be quite tasty if left alone in the cellar for a bit. 2026-2045. **88.**

2020 Bourgogne Pinot Noir “la Vigne d’Émile”- Domaine Céline et Frédéric Gueguen

The 2020 Bourgogne Pinot Noir “la Vigne d’Émile” is made from old vines, mostly planted out in Saint-Bris, so it has plenty of chalky undertow as well. The bouquet delivers scents of dark berries, cassis, a fine base of limestone minerality, coffee bean and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, young and full-bodied, with a good core and soil signature, ripe tannins and quite good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2025-2045. **88+.**



Domaine Christian Moreau (Chablis)

Christian and Fabien Moreau have made simply outstanding wines in 2020. The domaine has produced an utterly classic lineup in this vintage, with yields all quite correct, except in their fine parcels in the vineyard of Vaillon, which had some frost damage in the spring of 2020. So they were down by forty percent here in Vaillon, which will affect both their regular bottling of this fine premier cru and their special, old vine cuvée of Vaillon “Cuvée Guy Moreau”. The 2020 Chablis AC and regular bottling of Vaillon were both already bottled at the time of my visit on December 6th, with the other wines assembled in tanks and getting ready for bottling fairly early in the new year. The one exception to this was the 2020 Blanchot, which was still resting comfortably in cask and had not yet been racked. The only wine that was out of sort in the

Moreau family's lineup of 2020s was the Guy Moreau, as this wine was still a bit cloudy in tank and had obviously been assembled not long before my visit and was not in any mood to be bothered by tasters in early December. Given the excellence of all the other 2020s in the lineup here, I am sure the Guy Moreau bottling will also be superb, but I did not take a note on the wine, as it was clearly still agitated from its recent racking. Picking here started on August 28th in 2020 and none of the vines suffered at all from hydric stress, due to the timely showers that arrived a few times during the course of the growing season.

2020 Chablis- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The Moreau family makes excellent Chablis *villages* and the 2020 is no exception to this rule. This sample was from the second bottling run for this wine, which was done in early September of 2021. It comes in at a svelte 12.5 percent octane and offers up a lovely nose of green apple, lime, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely depth in the mid-palate, with impressive balance and grip, bright acids and a long, classy finish. 2022-2045. **90.**

2020 Chablis "Vaillon"- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2020 Vaillon is a fine bottle in the making. This wine is raised in a combination of about forty percent casks and sixty percent tank, with only five percent of the barrels used for it new in any given vintage, so there is just a whisper of vanillin oak in its profile. The 2020 Vaillon is superb and shows no ill effects from its spring frost troubles (except perhaps in the number of bottles that will be available), as the bouquet is bright and pure, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, sweet grapefruit, chalky soil tones, white flowers, a touch of vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and zesty, with lovely soil undertow, excellent focus and grip, bouncy acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2025-2050+. **92.**

2020 Chablis "Valmur"- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2020 Valmur *chez* Moreau was already assembled in tank, but the wine was in fine form and absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The refined aromatic constellation delivers scents of apple, pear, a very complex base of Kimmeridgian limestone soil, spring flowers, beeswax and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with impressive mineral drive and grip, snappy acids and a long, complex finish that closes today with just a touch of its new oak still showing. This will be further absorbed with a bit of bottle age and the wine will be perfectly balanced by the time it reaches cruising altitude. 2028-2070. **94+.**

2020 Chablis "Vaudésir"- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2020 Chablis "Vaudésir" from Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils is another fine, fine bottle in the making. The bouquet is pure and precise, wafting from the glass in a blend of pear, fresh lime, a lovely base of flinty, chalky soil tones, a discreet touch of vanillin oak, dried flowers, paraffin and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very long on the backend, with a superb core of fruit, lovely minerality and cut and a long, beautifully balanced and classy finish. First class Vaudésir! 2028-2070. **94+.**

2020 Chablis "Blanchots"- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The Blanchots *chez* Moreau is the family's smallest holding in a grand cru, so this is a wine that is never easy to find in the market. The 2020 version will be well worth a special search, as it too is a lovely bottle in the making. The nose delivers a lovely, youthful combination of tart orange, apple, beeswax, a complex base of chalky soil tones, gentle notes of new oak and

a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully delineated, with fine depth at the core, excellent transparency and bounce, zesty acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2070. **94+**.

2020 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2020 les Clos from the Moreau family is an excellent wine in the making. The nose is deep, pure and nascently complex, delivering scents of pear, apple, flinty, chalky soil tones, beeswax, a nice touch of vanillin oak and a topnote of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, poised and rock solid at the core, with superb mineral drive and focus, bright, snappy acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, very precise finish. All this beautiful example of les Clos will need is time in the cellar to start hitting on all cylinders. 2030-2070. **95**.



Christian and Fabien Moreau in their cellars a couple of years ago, as both were away at the time of my visit.

2020 Chablis “les Clos” Clos des Hospices- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

I used to think that the Clos des Hospices bottling was a bit more new oaky in personality than the regular les Clos here at Domaine Moreau, but I was ill-informed back in those days. This is simply a one hectare parcel of the grand cru that the family purchased from the Hospices in Chablis back in 1904 and have always bottled separately. It is raised in fifty percent casks each year, with about five percent of these new in any given vintage, and the rest raised in tank. The 2020 Clos des Hospices is a stellar wine in the making, offering up a pure and very deep bouquet of apple, pear, a touch of tart orange, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, just a whisper of oyster shell, beeswax, vanillin oak and a nice floral touch in the upper register of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows off lovely depth in the

mid-palate, with lovely soil signature and grip, zesty acids and a very long, focused and perfectly balanced finish. Fine, fine wine. 2030-2080. **96.**

Domaine Patrick Piuze (Chablis)

I had to loop back up to Chablis at the end of my trip to visit with Patrick Piuze this year, as he was away in his hometown of Montréal, Quebec, when I spent my first couple of days in the Chablis region earlier in the trip. However, as I anticipated, it was well worth another detour up north to Chablis, as he has made a truly stellar lineup of wines in 2020. Patrick decided to start harvesting very early in 2020, getting rolling with his picking on August 22nd, which was a few days earlier than any of his neighbors. He joked that “I worried we had blown the start date this year, as even Didier at Domaine William Fèvre did not get out in the vines until three or four days after us, and he is usually every bit as early as me in getting started picking!” But, in the end he was very happy that he started harvesting when he did, and the wines have turned out beautifully here in 2020, with great, zesty acids that recall the fine 2014 vintage chez Piuze, but with even a bit more mid-palate amplitude in evidence out of the blocks. This was the first vintage that Patrick Piuze had ever started in August, as even in 2018, he did not start the picking until the very beginning of September. There are a few changes in the lineup at Domaine Piuze this year, as the great old parcel of vines in the bottom section of the Bougros vineyard, in the subsection he labels as the Côte de Bouqueyreaux, were grubbed up after the 2019 vintage and so he no longer is producing this beautiful bottling. Prior to their being replanted, only Patrick and Didier Séguier at Domaine William Fèvre produced this unique and superior expression of Bougros, so Patrick joked that “every time I see Didier, I ask if he would like to sell me just a few grapes from his section, as it is better for the market that there are two of us with this bottling to offer!” There are not only subtractions in the lineup chez Piuze in 2020, as Patrick has added another fine bottling of Chablis AC to his roster, with a cuvée called “la Butte O” which is from a parcel of vines planted in 1982, and as the name might suggest, right next to the fine premier cru vineyard of Butteaux. There is also a second bottling from the premier cru of Vaulorent this year, from a little parcel in the vineyard known as “Quatre Chemins” and which is designated on the label with a “Q.C”, as it is not permitted to include separate lieux à dit names on labels that include the premier cru name. This is the warmest parcel in the vineyard of Vaulorent and Patrick picked it fully four days earlier than his regular parcels in this great premier cru vineyard. It is a stellar new addition to the lineup and somewhat compensates for the loss of the Côte de Bouqueyreaux this year, as it is truly of grand cru quality and aging potential. I did not taste the fine range of Bourgogne cuvées or the Petit Chablis bottling here in 2020, as we started right in on the Chablis “Découverte” this year (given that there was plenty of ground to cover). Patrick Piuze and his talented team have been at the top of their games for quite some time now, but the 2020 vintage here is truly exceptional and among the finest wines one will taste from this year!

2020 Chablis “Découverte”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 vintage of Découverte is excellent, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a beautiful blend of pear, apple, chalky minerality, lemon blossoms and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and crisp, with a pretty core, lovely mineral drive and grip, impeccable balance and a long, complex and classy finish. Fine juice, from a beautifully-situated parcel right next to the premier cru of Vaulorent. 2022-2040. **90.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de la Chapelle”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Terroir de la Chapelle bottling was new a couple of vintages ago from Patrick, but I got the age of the vines incorrect when I reported on this wine in 2018. The vines are in the village of la Chapelle de Vaupelteigne (where Jean-Claude Bessin has his cellar), which lies to the northwest of the town of Chablis, on the left bank of the Serein River and looking out at the ridge that houses the premier crus of l’Homme Mort and Fourchaume. I had mentioned that they were planted in 1974, but it turns out that they are even older, as ninety percent of this parcel was planted in 1959! The wine is excellent in 2020, delivering a refined bouquet of apple, deep soil tones, a touch of Fourchaume “woodsiness”, dried flowers and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full-bodied, with good acids, lovely focus and grip, a fine core of fruit and a long, soil-driven and complex finish. Fine juice that will drink with generosity right from the outset. 2022-2040. **90.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de Chablis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Terroir de Chablis bottling is a bit more tightly-strung than the Terroir de la Chapelle this year, with impressive mineral drive and inner tension that augurs very well for its evolution in bottle. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a vibrant blend of lemon, apple, beeswax, chalky minerality and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and zesty, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and grip, excellent focus and a long, complex and nicely balanced finish. I would try to give this at least a year or two in the cellar before starting to pull corks. 2023-2040. **90+.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de Chichée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Terroir de Chichée bottling from Domaine Piuze is also excellent, with impressive precision evident on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of lemon, pear, anise, chalky soil tones, citrus peel, fruit blossoms and just a hint of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and racy, with a fine core, lovely soil signature, bright acids and a long, complex and vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2024-2040+. **91+.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de Courgis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze’s 2020 Terroir de Courgis was also showing exceptional potential at the time of my visit. The bouquet is pure and precise, delivering a constellation of green apple, pear, wet stone minerality, citrus peel, gentle smokiness and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and rock solid at the core, with lovely mineral undertow, crisp acids and fine focus and grip on the long and seamlessly balanced finish. This is first class *villages*! 2024-2040+. **91+.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de Fyé”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Domaine Piuze’s 2020 Terroir de Fyé is another excellent AC, and this is just a touch more forward in personality than the Courgis or the Chichée and this is one that I would not hesitate to enjoy right from release. The nose jumps from the glass in a beautifully expressive blend of lime, pear, chalky minerality, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with fine complexity and bounce, zesty acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Very tasty! 2022-2040. **91.**

2020 Chablis “Terroir de Fleys”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick calls this his “baby Mont de Milieu” and the wine has turned out beautifully in 2020. These vines were planted back in 1982 and now are fully into their prime. The wine delivers a fine aromatic constellation of tart orange, pear, wet stone minerality, a touch of straw and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely

reserved in profile today, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and grip, zesty acids and a long, promising finish. 2024-2040. **90+**.

2020 Chablis “La Grande Vallée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

I love the La Grande Vallée bottling in 2020, which is probably true of every single vintage since Patrick first began producing this cuvée in the 2014 vintage! The 2020 version is beautifully pure, precise and defined by its minerality, wafting from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, lime, fruit blossoms, a very complex base of chalky minerality and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and racy, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil signature, crisp acids and a long, focused and perfectly balanced finish. Just a superb *villages*. 2024-2040+. **92**.

2020 Chablis “La Butte O”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The new bottling of Chablis *villages* that Patrick has named “La Butte O” hails from vines planted in 1982. The wine offers up a superb aromatic constellation of pear, tangerine, lime zest, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, a touch of paraffin and a topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and racy, with a lovely core, excellent soil undertow, bouncy acids and excellent length and grip on the impeccably balanced finish. A great new addition to the portfolio! 2024-2040. **92**.

2020 Chablis “Vaillons” Les Minots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 les Vaillons “Minots” from Domaine Piuze is simply outstanding. The bouquet is deep, pure and complex, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of lemon, pear, beeswax, chalky minerality, spring flowers, citrus peel and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, precise and complex, with excellent depth at the core, fine mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and a very long, refined and compelling finish. Great juice. 2025-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chablis “Les Roncières”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 les Roncières *chez* Piuze is another outstanding premier cru in the making. The wine delivers a fine aromatic combination of lemon, apple, limestone soil tones, spring flowers, paraffin and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with fine purity of fruit at the core, lovely soil definition and grip, bright, bouncy acids and lovely focus on the long, well-balanced and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2025-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chablis “les Séchets”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Chablis “les Séchets” from Domaine Piuze is a superb wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, focused and detailed, offering up scents of tart orange, lemon, pear, chalky minerality, citrus peel, vanillin oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great cut and grip, impressive focus and a long, racy and complex finish up impressive structural integrity. A beautiful wine in the making. 2026-2060+. **94**.

2020 Chablis “la Forêt”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze’s 2020 la Forêt is another very lovely bottle. The wine delivers a refined and very classic aromatic constellation of apple, pear, beeswax, lime peel, flinty minerality, a touch of sea salts, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, refined and complex, with a full-bodied format, lovely core and cut, impressive backend mineral drive and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. This does not have quite the same structural tension as the les Séchets, but it is another beautiful wine. 2024-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Montmains *chez* Piuze4 is produced from vines planted in 1956 and the wine is very, very good in 2020. It is a bit more reticent today than the previous premier crus in the lineup, but

with a bit of swirling reveals scents of apple, lemon, wet stone minerality, beeswax, a touch of anise, white flowers and a deft touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, racy and reserved, with a fine core, lovely mineral drive and grip, bright acids and a long, crisp and very promising finish. This will need some bottle age to blossom, but it will be excellent. 2027-2060. **93+.**



The beautiful les Clos vineyard under some early November sun, before all of the leaves had fallen.

2020 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick’s 2020 Butteaux is utterly classic in personality and superb in potential quality. The nose jumps from the glass in a refined blend of apple, pear, a complex base of chalky soil tones, paraffin, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows of gorgeous fruit at the core, with excellent soil undertow, bright, zesty acids, fine focus and grip and a long, perfectly balanced and complex finish. Great juice. 2025-2060. **94.**

2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre” from Domaine Piuze is superb. The bouquet offers up a stunning blend of lemon, orange zest, pear, a touch of beeswax, a fabulously complex base of limestone minerality, citrus blossoms, a touch of oyster shell and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied, pure and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive and cut, excellent focus and balance and a very, very long, complex and utterly refined finish. A beautiful bottle in the making. 2028-2070. **94+.**

2020 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Vaulorent from Patrick Piuze is outstanding. The bouquet is pure, precise and complex, wafting from the glass in a suave mix of apple, pear, chalky minerality, a touch of raw almond, white lilies, beeswax and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and nicely reserved in personality, with a full-bodied format, a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature and a long, nascently complex and vibrant finish. This wine has beautiful grip and purity and all it needs is some time in the cellar to properly blossom. 2028-2070. **94.**

2020 Chablis “Vaulorent” Q.C.- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The new Quatre Chemin bottling of Vaulorent from Domaine Piuze is truly stunning and is really of grand cru quality in 2020. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of pear, apple, lemon, a great base of chalky minerality, a touch of iodine, beeswax, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with a bit more mid-palate depth than the regular bottling of Vaulorent, great cut and grip, perfect balance and a very, very long, complex and vibrant finish. Stunning juice! 2028-2070. **95+.**

2020 Chablis “Blanchots”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick joked that “I should have served the Blanchots in front of the Quatre Chemin”, meaning no disrespect to the excellent Blanchots in the cellar, but underscoring just how special the new bottling from Vaulorent is this year. But, the 2020 Blanchots needs no apology, as the wine is lovely, offering up a deep and complex nose of apple, pear, orange peel, a fine base of limestone minerality, white flowers, paraffin and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and cock solid at the core, with fine complexity and cut, impeccable balance and a long, classic finish. The wine is already very refined on the attack, but still fairly closed on the backend and will demand a good decade in the cellar to truly hit on all cylinders. Fine wine. 2030-2080. **95.**

2020 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Bougros can sometimes be a bit more fruit-driven in personality out of the blocks than most other grand crus, but this is most emphatically not the case with Patrick Piuze’s version in 2020. The aromatic constellation is precise and minerally in personality, offering up scents of apple, pear, beeswax, a hint of *crème patissière*, citrus peel, oyster shell minerality, vanillin oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and defined by its underlying soil, with a lovely core of perfectly ripe fruit, a fine girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. 2028-2080. **95.**

2020 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 Valmur from Patrick Piuze is even a hair better than the first two grand crus in the tasting lineup. The wine delivers lovely precision on the nose, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of apple, pear, tart orange, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, beeswax, dried flowers and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and focused, with a rock solid core of fruit, stunning soil signature, bright, racy acids and laser-like focus on the long and complex finish. Great juice. 2030-2080. **96.**

2020 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2020 les Clos from Domaine Piuze is simply stunning. The nose delivers a kaleidoscopic blend of lemon, tart orange, pear, oyster shell, limestone minerality, paraffin, white flowers and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and again, shows stunning depth at the core, with great focus and grip, snappy acids, stunning backend mineral drive and a long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. Simply brilliant juice! 2030-2080+. **97.**

2020 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze’s 2020 les Preuses is every bit as beautiful as the les Clos in this vintage and I would like nothing more than to have the chance to compare the two side by side ten or twenty years down the road! The bouquet here is utterly classical in profile, delivering scents of lemon, pear, beeswax, a multi-faceted foundation of limestone minerality, spring flowers, vanillin oak and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and precise, with a great core, a stunning mineral bath on the backend, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, complex and seamless finish. Pure magic. 2030-2080+. **97.**

Domaine Raveneau (Chablis)

The Raveneau family began picking on August 28th in 2020 and like many of their neighbors, Isabelle Raveneau reported that yields were quite reasonable in this vintage, as hydric stress was not a factor. The crop here was generally in the forty-five to fifty hectoliter range for the villages and premier crus, which is the sweet spot for classic-styled Chablis and that is exactly what the Raveneaus have produced in their beautiful lineup of 2020s. Out of cask, the wines remind me quite a bit of the beautiful 2000 vintage here, though probably with a bit more depth and structural snap, which augurs extremely well for their future development. Everything from the Petit Chablis up to the grand crus remained comfortably resting in cask in the cool Raveneau cellars, with bottling scheduled to begin not too long into the new year and the grand crus will probably have their mise in March or April of 2022. The wines are truly beautiful expressions of their underlying terroirs, with bright, pure and very precise fruit tones, really lovely girdles of acidity and the focus and inherent complexity that this domaine always seems to find from year to year. They will be cellar treasures. I know that these are some of the more expensive examples of Chablis that one can find out on the market, but keep in mind that the Raveneau family’s prices out the cellar door are actually lower than several of their neighbors who also make excellent Chablis, and all of the profiteering takes place once the wines get into the hands of their importers and merchants around the globe and does not find its way into the pockets of the Raveneaus. As Patrick Piuze once joked to the family, “just double your prices ex-cellar, as it will not affect what your customers are ultimately paying one single bit; it is just your importers will have to start driving Jaguars, instead of Bentleys- but, at least they will still be driving really nice English cars!” But, for the present time, both the Raveneau and Dauvissat families remain resistant to raising their prices ex-cellar for their wines, being less than sanguine about the huge push in prices upward further south in the Côte d’Or, and if you wonder who to thank for Chablis remaining such a relative value in the context of today’s Burgundy pricing, it is these two domaines who are primarily responsible for keeping a modicum of sanity to Chablis prices. But, do not thank their merchants around the globe, as they are taking very long margins on the wines from these two great estates in Chablis, as Patrick Piuze so poignantly observes.

2020 Petit Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

It is probably a bit more than ten years since the Petit Chablis made its debut in the Raveneau family’s lineup of wines and this has been a tremendous value since its very first vintage. The 2020 is again a lovely wine in the making, offering up a bright and complex bouquet of apple, fresh-squeezed lemon, chalky minerality, spring flowers and just a touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and crisp, with a very

good core of fruit this year, lovely mineral drive, bright acids and impeccable balance on the long, focused and complex finish. A lovely bottle. 2022-2040. **90.**

2020 Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

As is the case with the 2020 Petit Chablis this year, the regular Chablis *villages* is also notable for its impressive mid-palate depth this year, while still retaining its classical sense of proportion and mineral drive. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a sophisticated blend of apple, pear, a fine base of chalky soil tones, a touch of oyster shell, beeswax and a lovely floral topnote redolent of white lilies. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and deep at the core, with lovely tension and cut on the backend, fine soil signature and a long, beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine AC. 2025-2050. **91.**



2020 Chablis “Forêt”- Domaine Raveneau

The Domaine Raveneau Forêt is excellent in the 2020 vintage. The bouquet is bright and precise, but notably more reserved in personality at the present time than the Chablis *villages*. It delivers scents of lemon, pink grapefruit, apple, a fine base of limestone, paraffin and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with a fine core, lovely backend energy and cut, impressive minerality and a long, elegant and vibrant finish. This is going to be excellent, but it will demand a bit of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2027-2060+. **93.**

2020 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Vaillons from the Raveneau family is equally young and built for the long haul, but it is very precise and shows a bit less reserve today than is the case with the Forêt. The bouquet is bright and nascently complex, delivering scents of apple, pear, beeswax, wet stone minerality, citrus peel and a lovely floral topnote of white flowers and citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and full, with a lovely core of perfectly ripe, crunchy fruit, fine soil signature, zesty acids and a long, complex and marvelously balanced finish. First class juice. 2025-2060+. **93.**

2020 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Montmains from Domaine Raveneau is again, a bit tightly-knit out of the blocks and shares more structural similarities today with the Forêt, rather than the Vaillons. Though the nose is still quite primary, it is already showing shadings of the candied lemon tones that are the calling card of so many bottlings of Raveneau Chablis with bottle age, as it wafts from the glass in a mix of green apple, lemon, paraffin, chalky minerality, straw and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is bright, deep, full-bodied and fairly closed today, with a lovely core, a fine girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and soil-driven finish. All this needs is bottle age. 2027-2060+. **93.**

2020 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Chablis “Butteaux” from Domaine Raveneau is a notable step up this year from the very good lineup of premier crus that preceded it in the tasting, as this has real grand cru depth and length. The aromatic constellation is outstanding, offering up a blend of pear, apple, beeswax, a beautifully deep, complex base of chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is bright, crisp and full-bodied, with a rock solid core of fruit, outstanding mineral drive and grip, snappy acids, laser-like focus and a very long, soil-driven and complex finish. Great juice. 2030-2080. **94+.**

2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Montée de Tonnerre *chez* Raveneau is another stunning wine in the making. The nose is bright, pure and youthful, jumping from the glass in a mix of apple, lemon, pear, paraffin, a superb base of limestone minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved in personality today, with again, a rock solid core, a complex undertow of chalky minerality, bright, snappy acids and a very long, focused and superbly balanced finish. Another great young wine. 2030-2080. **95.**

2020 Chablis “Blanchot”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Blanchot from the Raveneau family is yet again, a beautiful bottle in the making. In some vintages this can be a bit more forward out of cask than the Montée de Tonnerre, but this is most emphatically not the case in this vintage, as this wine has excellent structure and is fairly reserved at the present time. But, there is stellar depth here lurking just below the surface, offering up scents of apple, pear, a touch of sweet grapefruit, beeswax, a fine base of chalky soil, dried flowers and a bit of lemon peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full, powerful and seamless, with a great core, fine transparency and cut, laser-like focus and a very long, very pure and classy finish. 2030-2085. **95+.**

2020 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Raveneau Valmur will be one of the legends of the vintage in Burgundy twenty or thirty years from now. The nose is deep, refined and precise, delivering scents of tart orange, pear, apple, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, a touch of anise, citrus peel, wet stones, spring flowers and beeswax. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and gorgeously

structured, with a rock solid core, stunning backend minerality and grip, zesty acids and a very, very long, very pure finish. 2032-2085+. **97.**

2020 Chablis “Clos”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2020 Chablis “Clos” from Domaine Raveneau is simply brilliant. The bouquet delivers a youthful blend of lemon, pear, apple, flinty minerality, a touch of paraffin, lemon peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and rock solid, with bottomless depth, impeccable balance, snappy acids and a very, very long, precise finish that closes with excellent lift and bounce. This will take plenty of time to come around, but it is going to be pure magic when it is truly ready to drink! 2035-2090. **98.**

Gevrey-Chambertin

Domaine Denis Bachelet

Denis Bachelet feels, unequivocally, that the 2020 vintage is for him, one of the three finest of his entire career. In his opinion, “only the 1999 and 2002 vintage produced wines of the same quality as my 2020s- this is a great, great vintage and one of the best in my career.” He noted that it was necessary to get out and start picking in a timely manner in 2020, as “the bunches were starting to raisin and dehydrate, and you cannot make great wine with grapes like that.” So, he got rolling on August 27th and finished up on the 31st of the month, but with low yields across the board in his vineyards, as the crop was off by fully fifty percent of a normal year in 2020. Consequently, he will not produce his lovely Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles” in this vintage, as he needed to add it into the Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes” to get a few more bottles of that cuvée for clients who are not going to be thrilled with the size of allocations brought about by the very short yields- particularly given how stunning these 2020s are going to be! Denis commented (without being prompted) that he “cannot understand some of my colleagues who started picking ten days or two weeks later than me in 2020, as by then, the bunches were dehydrated and you simply cannot make great wine with grapes in such condition.” He noted that it was blazingly hot at the time of harvest at the end of August and to let the bunches sit out in that heat and continue to raisin for such an extended period of time was simply madness to him. In any case, Monsieur Bachelet picked at a seemingly perfect time and has produced a stunning range of 2020s, with alcohol levels that are quite normal, stunning purity and sappiness and a fidelity to their underlying terroir that is the essence of truly great Burgundy. These are some of the most brilliant red wines one can find in the 2020 vintage!

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2020 Bourgogne Rouge is a fine bottle in the making in the Bachelet cellars, as this wine has excellent mid-palate stuffing and a very sophisticated structural chassis. The nose offers up scent of black cherries, black raspberries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, plenty of smokiness and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively soil-driven for its appellation, with a good core, a touch of backend tannin and a long, classy finish. Good juice that will need at least a couple of years in the cellar to blossom. 2025-2040+. **89.**

2020 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2020 Côte de Nuits Villages *chez* Bachelet is another truly excellent wine and this is going to be one of the steals of the vintage. The aromatic constellation reveals a panoply of sweet dark berries, cassis, grilled meats, coffee bean, a fine base of soil tones and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is sappy, full and complex, with a marvelous core, lovely

dark soil undertow, suave, buried tannins and a very long, well-balanced finish. This is a wine that the value-conscious Burgundy lover should make an extra effort to tuck away in the cellar! 2026-2050. **91+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The old vine Gevrey *villages* bottling is truly exceptional in 2020 from Monsieur Bachelet. The bouquet is simply fabulous already, soaring from the glass in a blaze of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, black minerality, a touch of new oak and an exotic topnote of anise. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and gorgeously sappy at the core, with a seamless structure, great soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. Stunning juice for an old vine *villages* bottling! 2030-2075. **93**.



The proud papa- Denis Bachelet in his cellars after showing off his stunning lineup of 2020s!

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Corbeaux” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

Les Corbeaux is one of my favorite premier crus in all of Gevrey-Chambertin and Denis Bachelet’s magical 2020 version will make a believer of anyone in this fine *terroir*! The superb nose delivers a refined and sappy constellation of cassis, black raspberries, grilled meats, a touch of cigar wrapper, a complex base of Corbeaux’s dark soil tones, coffee bean and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and bottomless at the sappy core, with

stunning transparency and focus, ripe, seamless tannins and a very, very long, complex and oh, so promising finish. Stunning juice. 2033-2090. **94+**.

2020 Charmes-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

And the ancient vines in Monsieur Bachelet’s parcel of Charmes-Chambertin? They have produced a magical wine in 2020. The deep, sappy and utterly refined bouquet delivers scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, grilled meats, espresso, woodsmoke, a very, very complex base of soil tones, raw cocoa and a lovely framing of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and again, simply bottomless at the core, with sappy fruit linked to stunning mineral drive and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins, flawless balance and a very, very long, complex and focused finish. A great, great wine in the making. 2040-2100+. **98**.

Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Philippe Harmand has made a fine range of 2020s. He began harvesting on August 30th in this vintage, but the hydric stress of the growing season was very much felt in the family’s vineyards, as yield were also off by fifty percent here in 2020. All of the Harmands’ 2020s had been racked into tanks two weeks prior to my visit for bottling early in 2022, with the exception of the Lavaux St. Jacques and Mazis-Chambertin, which were still resting comfortably in cask. But, Philippe had not yet adjusted their SO2 levels or done any filtration yet, so the wines were showing quite well on the first of December of this year. Across the board, the range of 2020 bottlings showed beautifully pure, sappy fruit tones, good soil signatures and ripe, buried tannins and are among the ringing successes to be found in this vintage. The wines are generally ripe in the style of the vintage, but only one or two of the latest-picked villages-level parcels show any hint of sur maturité, and in general, this is a roster of 2020 Gevreys that offer outstanding depth and purity of fruit, beautiful soil signatures and well-integrated, firm structures that will demand some bottle age before the wines start to drink with generosity, but which also promises to carry them far into the future. I did not write down the exact alcohol levels for the 2020 range, but I seem to recall that they were ever so slightly higher across the board than the 2019s here, which all landed between thirteen and fourteen percent octane. But, the 2020s generally have excellent balance and precision, and plenty of freshness and will pay handsome dividends if tucked away in the cellar until they are ready to drink. There are several other domaines who crafted extremely successful 2020 reds in the style of the Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy wines this year, with plush and sappy fruit components, lovely mineral drive, alcohols generally between 13.5 and 14.5 percent and great vibrancy to the range of wines that shows that there was more than one style of success to be found in 2020. Philippe Harmand has made excellent 2020s and he is very clearly one of the top young winegrowers in the commune of Gevrey-Chambertin today!

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is a fine example, offering up a sappy nose of black cherries, black raspberries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively light on its feet, with a good core, a nice touch of backend tannin, bouncy acids and good focus and balance on the long finish. This will need a bit of bottle age to blossom. Good juice. 2026-2040+. **89**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Gevrey villages from Philippe Harmand is really strong this year. The wine delivers a vibrant aromatic constellation of sappy black cherries and dark berries, grilled meats, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil tones and a touch of new oak. On the palate the

wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely transparent in personality, with a fine core, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and already quite suave finish. This is excellent *villages*! 2030-2065. **90+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “en Jouse”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 en Jouse bottling *chez* Harmand is a bit riper in personality than the straight Gevrey AC, and not quite as elegant as a result. The black fruity and sappy nose jumps from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark berries, hung game, chocolate, bonfire, dark soil tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and shows copious quantity of fruit at the core, with seamless tannins, tangy acids and a long, ripe and buxom finish. This flirts with *sur maturité* just a bit, like a 1990 red Burgundy might have back in the day, and is not quite as refined in personality this year as the regular AC bottling. But, it does have depth and stuffing to burn. 2032-2065. **90**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Clos Prieur from the Harmands is outstanding in this vintage, with none of the ripeness issues that define the en Jouse at the present time. The very precise and beautifully measured nose delivers a beautiful constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, a touch of licorice, dark soil tones, grilled meats and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and impeccably balanced, with a fine core, lovely mineral drive and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. This is excellent and one of the steals of the vintage! 2033-2070+. **91+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The Domaine Harmand 2020 Vieilles Vignes bottling is another excellent young Gevrey in the making. The bouquet here is nicely ripe (but not overripe), bright and focused, as it offers up scents of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, a fine base of black minerality, just a hint of anise, bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a lovely sense of sappiness at the core, ripe, seamless tannins, lovely focus and balance and a long, very promising finish. Good juice, but perhaps just a touch riper in personality than the Clos Prieur this year. 2031-2065+. **91**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bossière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bossière” from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is very, very fine this year. The elegant young nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, dark soil tones, a nice touch of cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerfully styled for the la Bossière vineyard this year, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine soil undertow, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, young and tangy finish. This is excellent. 2033-2080. **92**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Perrière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 la Perrière is excellent *chez* Harmand and shows off the perfect ripeness that Philippe was able to attain in each and every one of his premier crus this year. The nose is deep, sappy and nascently complex, delivering a fine constellation of black cherries, fresh black raspberries, grilled meats, woodsmoke, dark chocolate, a beautiful base of black minerality and a nice touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and deep and sappy at the core, with excellent soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and great focus and balance on the long, very classy finish. First class juice. 2035-2080+. **93**.



Philippe Harmand in the cuverie of the family domaine of Harmand-Geoffroy.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Philippe Harmand’s 2020 Champeaux is another excellent wine in the making. The bouquet delivers a fine range of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a nice touch of meatiness, a beautifully complex base of soil, bitter chocolate, cedar and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with a great core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and focus, ripe, fine-grained tannins and superb length and grip on the impeccably balanced finish. A beautiful bottle of Champeaux in the making. 2035-2085. **93.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Lavaux St. Jacques from Domaine Harmand is a stunning young wine. It delivers a glorious aromatic constellation of black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, complex black minerality, a hint of mustard seed, raw cocoa, bonfire and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and shows off superb sappy fruit at the core, with excellent mineral undertow, fine focus and balance and a long, ripely tannic and very complex finish. This is going to be a great wine when it is fully ready to drink! 2035-2090. **94.**

2020 Mazis-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2020 Mazis-Chambertin from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is another simply great bottle in the making. The bouquet is deep, pure, precise and sappy, wafting from the glass in a mix of cassis, sweet blackberries, espresso, grilled venison, a great base of black soil tones,

woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and shows off stunning mid-palate depth, with its sappy fruit beautifully synthesized with great mineral drive and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, tangy and vibrant finish of outstanding complexity. 2038-2100+. **97.**

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The Rossignol brothers have made absolutely stellar 2020s. The domaine's harvesting team got out in the vines on August 29th of this year and managed to keep alcohol levels beautifully in check in this vintage, as the 2020s here range from 12.6 to 13.2 percent octane across the entire lineup of wines. This is pretty remarkable for the solar summer of 2020! A few of the wines had already been racked out of cask and into tank in preparation for their bottling early in the new year, but most of the wines were still in barrel. I did not have the chance to taste the Cherbaudes, Corbeaux or Combottes premier crus this year and am not sure if they will be bottled on their own in the short crop of 2020, or perhaps blended into a single premier cru bottling, as yields were low in this vintage and all three of those cuvées from the Rossignols are made from very small parcels. The range of 2020s from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet were also quite exceptional in several showing lovely red fruity tones on both the nose and palate, which is a fairly rare commodity in the generally very black fruity vintage of 2020. The wines do not share the concentrated style of so many wines in this vintage, as 2020 is a very refined, elegant and classically proportioned vintage chez Rossignol and it is hard not to come to the conclusion that these will be some of the very, very finest red wines produced in the vintage. The Rossignols used fifty to fifty-five percent whole clusters in this vintage, depending upon the cuvée, as in general, they were quite content with the ripeness of the stems in 2020 and felt that the whole clusters will really add to the personality of the wines down the road, not to mention assist in keeping the octane levels in check during fermentations (as fermenting with stems lowers alcohol). This is one of the finest lineups of 2020 red wines that I tasted during my trip and as the wines from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet still remain relative values in the otherwise overheated Burgundy market, they will be worth the search to find and tuck away in the cellar, as one day the market is going to wake up and realize just how stunning these wines are these days and, if history is any guide, prices will start to march upwards from that point onwards. These are very classically-styled and beautifully perfumed 2020s.

2020 Beaune "les Mariages"- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2020 Beaune "Mariages" cuvée was scheduled for bottling just before Christmas, but was showing very well indeed at the time of my visit on December 3rd. This is a very pretty *villages* level wine, offering up a deep and vibrant bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, gamebird, woodsmoke, just a whisper of oak and a lovely base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, bouncy and full, with a good core and soil signature, moderate tannins and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2030-2065+. **90+.**

2020 Beaune "Theurons"- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2020 Theurons is also excellent and shows that extra level of depth and refinement that one expects from a premier cru in Beaune. The nose shows a lovely touch of red fruit in its constellation (so rare in this vintage), which delivers scents of cherries, red plums, a touch of dark berry, gamebird, raw cocoa, an excellent base of dark soil tones and a nice touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a nice dollop of sappiness at the core,

with lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, poised and well balanced finish. This is a lovely wine in the making. 2032-2085. **92.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

As was the case with both Beaune bottlings at the time of my visit, the 2020 Gevrey “Vieilles Vignes” was also already assembled in tank for bottling at the start of the year. The wine is very pure and elegant in profile this year, offering up scents of red and black cherries, red plums, grilled meats, a touch of cigar wrapper, dark soil tones, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and svelte in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and fine focus on the long and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2070. **91.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The premier cru of Clos Prieur is usually one of the more black fruity wines in Gevrey, but the Rossignol brothers’ 2020 version is again beautifully infused with red fruity tones on both the nose and palate. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of cherries, red plums, a touch of strawberry, dark soil tones, grilled meats, lovely spice elements, mustard seed and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nicely structured, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, poised and very promising finish. This will demand some cellaring time to blossom, but it is going to be a top notch example of the vintage! 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

One of my projects that was put on a back burner because of Covid was an exploration of the beautiful premier cru *terroir* of Petite Chapelle, once every bit as treasured in Gevrey as Clos St. Jacques. Tasting this beautiful young 2020 version from the Rossignol family has me excited to get the pandemic finally behind us and get rolling on that article! The wine here is again strikingly red fruity and perfumed for the vintage, offering up a nose of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, a beautiful base of soil tones, gamebird, a deft foundation of vanillin oak and a hint of balsam bough in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full and precise, with a beautiful core of pure fruit, lovely transparency and bounce, suave tannins and a long, vibrant and soil-driven finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

One would expect that the cooler *terroir* of Latricières would have done well in the heat of 2020 and this certainly seems to be the case with the fine example from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a beautiful young blend of red and black cherries, black plums, gamebird, gorgeous spice tones from the whole clusters, a very complex base of black minerality, mustard seed and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and seamlessly balanced, with a fine core of fruit, great mineral drive and grip, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and beautiful focus and balance on the very long, complex and utterly classical finish. Great wine. 2036-2100+. **95.**

2020 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2020 Rossignol-Trapet Chapelle-Chambertin is a simply stunning young wine. The bouquet delivers a beautiful aromatic combination of red and black cherries, red plums, gamebird, cocoa powder, a hint of orange zest, a gorgeous base of soil, mustard seed and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a gorgeously sappy core of fruit, great soil inflection, ripe, buried tannins and a very, very long, complex and vibrant finish. Stunning, stunning juice! 2035-2100+. **96.**

2020 Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2020 Chambertin from the Rossignol family is another truly brilliant young example of the vintage. The bouquet is deep, reserved and already very complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of red plums, red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, mustard seed, coffee bean, raw cocoa and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, deep, full and sappy at the core, with stunning mineral drive, great focus and grip, ripe, firm and seamless tannins and stunning length on the perfectly balanced and tangy finish. All this beautiful wine needs is sufficient time in the cellar to blossom completely. 2037-2100+. **97.**



David and Nicolas Rossignol of Domaine Rossignol-Trapet.

Domaine Joseph Roty

As is my custom at Domaine Joseph Roty, I tasted the 2019s during my December visit to the region, as the Roty family vastly prefers to show their new wines when they have already been bottled and had time to recover from the mise. So, I am always reporting on the wines one vintage behind many of their peers, but I personally enjoy this possibility, as it allows for a chance to revisit the previous vintage during a trip when I am mostly tasting young wines out of cask from the following year. Not surprisingly, Pierre-Jean Roty has made simply superb 2019s. During our tasting I was very happy to hear the news that the INAO has finally agreed to promote a few of the vineyards in the commune of Marsannay to premier cru status. This is a step that has long been merited and in the next few years we will finally see some premier cru bottlings from the village. I do not know the complete roster of lieux à dits that will be elevated

to premier cru status, but among the bottlings from the Roty family, the Champs Saint Etienne, Boivin and Clos de Jeu will all become premier crus when the changes become official. Much to my surprise, the vineyard of Ouzeloy is going to remain designated as a “Villages” level bottling, which I think is incorrect, as this has always been one of my favorite Marsannay cuvées chez Roty. But, perhaps the terroir in the entire vineyard is not quite as uniform as some of the others designated to become premier crus and this was the reason for it not being included in the parcels designated for promotion. Pierre-Jean started harvesting on September 20th in 2019 and has managed to craft wines that fall within their normal octane range and do not show any of the higher octane aspects that are occasionally found in this solar vintage. What was quite refreshing about these 2019s is how much red fruit aspects several of them show, which was a nice contrast to all of the black fruit to be found in so many of the collections of 2020 reds. They will be beautifully long-lived wines and several reminded me of the 1989s here that were crafted by Pierre-Jean’s father all those years ago and were one of my first introductions to the beautiful wines produced by the Roty family.

2019 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Roty family’s 2019 Bourgogne Blanc is a lovely middleweight in the making. The bouquet is bright and nicely ripe, offering up notes of lemon, quince, chalky soil tones, white flowers, a touch of sea salt and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, crisp and nicely juicy at the core, with good focus, bouncy acids and a long, wide open finish. Good juice. 2022-2030. **88.**

2019 Marsannay Blanc- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Marsannay Blanc *chez Roty* is also a very tasty bottle in the making, but this is a touch more structured and youthful out of the blocks that the Bourgogne Blanc and I would opt for tucking it away for a year or two and letting it blossom. The nose offers up scents of tart apple, pear, lime blossoms, white soil tones, a touch of raw almond and gentle spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and tightly-knit, with a good core and soil signature, quite good acids for the vintage and good length and grip on the nicely balanced finish. 2023-2035. **89.**

2019 Marsannay Rosé- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Marsannay Rosé from Domaine Joseph Roty is another very good example, as is always the case with this bottling from the estate. The bouquet is bright, zesty and nicely ripe, delivering a mix of white cherries, sweet quince, watermelon, a good base of soil tones and a topnote of dried rose petals. On the palate the wine is crisp, full and gently vinous in personality, with lovely mid-palate depth, nice framing acids and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Lovely juice. 2022-2032. **90.**

2019 Coteaux Bourguignons - Domaine Joseph Roty

This bottling *chez Roty* is entirely produced from pinot noir and is very tasty in 2019. The wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with good structure, modest tannins and really very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. The bouquet is completely inviting already, offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, meaty tones, woodsmoke and an excellent base of soil. I would opt for giving this wine a few years in the cellar, just to let the palate blossom and fully catch up with the generosity already in evidence on the nose. A fine value. 2025-2040. **89.**

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Rotys' Bourgogne rouge bottling is produced entirely from parcels in the village of Marsannay. The 2019 version is a bit riper in personality than the Coteaux Bourguignons bottling this year and I do not have quite the same fondness for it. The nose shows a ripe blend of baked black cherries, plums, chocolate, woodsmoke, hung venison and a good base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still nicely plush at the core, with chewy, moderate tannins and a long, complex finish. This is a bit more tight out of the blocks than the wine above, so perhaps I am judging it unfairly and it will come into its own with a bit of bottle age. But, right now, there is just a wisp of *sur maturité* to its profile that reminds me more of a 1990 than a 1989 Burgundy, and which I find a tad less appealing. 2025-2040. **88.**

2019 Bourgogne "Pressonniers"- Domaine Joseph Roty

As I have mentioned in the past, the Pressonniers *climat* lies in Gevrey-Chambertin and once upon a time, this used to be sold at Gevrey *villages*. These days, it is only ranked as a Bourgogne level bottling, but its quality is consistently excellent and it is always one of the best values out there in the world of red Burgundy. The 2019 is excellent, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, sweet cassis, smoked meats, a touch of licorice, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely transparent in personality, with a good core, suave, moderate tannins and a long, very nicely balanced and quite complex finish. Good juice in the making here! 2023-2040+. **89+.**

2019 Marsannay- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Marsannay *villages* from Domaine Roty is an excellent bottle. The wine delivers a superb aromatic constellation of black cherries, red plums, grilled meats, dark chocolate, a complex base of soil, a nice touch of spicy oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite elegant in profile, with a lovely core, suave, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the nicely balanced and quite complex finish. Good juice. 2023-2045+. **90.**

2019 Marsannay "Champs Saint Etienne"- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Champs Saint Etienne bottling from the Roty family is made from a parcel of vines that are over fifty years of age. The 2019 version is another excellent Marsannay in the making, delivering a fine bouquet of black cherries, red plums, smoked meats, a fine base of soil, a touch of cocoa powder, gentle new oak tones and an exotic (at least from Marsannay) floral topnote that recalls both lavender and eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is complex, pure and full, with excellent mid-palate depth, lovely soil signature and balance, refined tannins and a long, complex and quite classy finish. 2024-2050. **91.**

2019 Marsannay "Ouzeloy"- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Ouzeloy is a deep, full and well-balanced example of the vintage, but it is showing just a touch more ripeness than some of these other Marsannays, with just a hint of *sur maturité*, and so it does not quite score as highly for me for these reasons. However, that said, the wine is lovely on the palate, with its full-bodied, well-balanced and ripely tannic format. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up scents of cassis, black plum, chocolate, venison, a touch of coffee grounds and a smoky topnote. Though there is a hint of *sur maturité* here, the wine also has lovely backend mineral drive and lift and perhaps I am being just a bit too picky about its relative ripeness level? 2026-2050. **89+.**

2019 Marsannay "Boivin" - Domaine Joseph Roty

The vineyard of Boivin is one that is scheduled to be promoted to premier cru, once the INAO has completed its necessary studies and the elevation takes place. One could certainly use

the stellar 2019 version from the Rotys as an example of why this should be premier cru, as the wine is excellent on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers a blend of cassis, red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, coffee bean and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely complexity and balance, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, classy finish. This is excellent wine in the making! 2027-2050. **91+**.

2019 Marsannay “Clos de Jeu”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The Clos de Jeu will also be promoted eventually to premier cru and it too is showing its lovely potential in this 2019 bottling from Domaine Roty. The nose jumps from the glass in a complex blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, smoked meats, a touch of licorice, a fine base of soil tones, woodsmoke and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy in personality, with a rock solid core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and grip, well-integrated tannins and a long, complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2027-2050. **91+**.



Pierre-Jean Roty in his beloved parcel of la Brunelle right behind the domaine's cuverie in Gevrey.

2019 Côte de Nuits Villages “Queue de Hareng”- Domaine Joseph Roty

Like Denis Bachelet, the Roty family has old vines in this parcel of vines located in the village of Brochon, as they are more than sixty years of age. This will be the last vintage that they produce this bottling, but Pierre-Jean told me that they have already located and contracted for another parcel in Brochon to replace these, and those vines are even older! The last vintage of

the Queue de Hareng bottling is lovely, offering up a suave nose of black cherries, plums, grilled meats, a fine base of dark soil tones and a bit of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is already quite suave on the attack, full-bodied and deep, with a fine core of fruit, lovely soil undertow, moderate tannins and a long, complex and very tasty finish. Good juice. 2023-2045. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Gevrey *villages* bottling from Domaine Roty is very tasty. The bouquet is deep and black fruity, offering up scents of cassis, black plums, smoked meats, dark soil tones, espresso and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with good focus and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, well-balanced and promising finish. This is a bit more structured out of the blocks than any of the Marsannays and will need some bottle age to blossom, but it will be a very good bottle in due course. 2029-2070. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Brunelle”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 la Brunelle was the only wine in the lineup that was still a bit out of sorts from its bottling in the spring, as the wine had not yet come together and was still in the process of absorbing its new oak. Consequently, it was showing rather woody at this time, though I have no doubt this was just a phase for the wine post-bottling. The bouquet, under the veneer of spicy new oak, offers up scents of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, espresso, a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and promising, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, tannic finish. All this needs is time to integrate its wood component more completely. 2030-2075. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur Bas”- Domaine Joseph Roty

In contrast to the grumpy la Brunelle, the 2019 Clos Prieur Bas bottling was absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The stellar nose soars from the glass in a very expressive blend of black cherries, dark berries, a lovely base of black minerality, grilled meats, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a deft foundation of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a sappy core, excellent mineral drive and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. First class *villages*. 2030-2075. **92**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champs Chenys”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Champs Chenys is also outstanding in this vintage. In fact, as Pierre-Jean and I were enjoying our conversation so thoroughly while tasting, that he inadvertently served this after the Fontenys premier cru, and it had no trouble holding its own! The bouquet is deep, precise and flat out superb, delivering scents of plums, black cherries, cassis, coffee bean, a beautiful base of soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with fine focus and balance, suave, buried tannins and a long, complex and very, very refined finish. 2028-2075. **92**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Fontenys”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The very old vine Fontenys is very, very elegant in profile in 2019. The bouquet is deep, young and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, cassis, smoked meats, a touch of licorice, a classy foundation of black minerality, woodsmoke, espresso and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very much defined by its underlying minerality, but with a beautiful core of sappy black fruit, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long, focused and very, very promising finish. Outstanding juice. 2033-2100. **94**.

2019 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Mazy-Chambertin is utterly brilliant. The bouquet is pure, precise and beautifully sappy in personality, soaring from the glass in a mix of black cherries, cassis, smoked meats, very complex, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, those savory elements particular to Mazy's

terroir, coffee bean and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and perfectly balanced, with a beautiful core of fruit, stunning mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and a very, very long, complex and seamless finish. A great, great wine in the making. 2035-2120. **98.**

2019 Griottes-Chambertin- Domaine Joseph Roty

The 2019 Griotte from Pierre-Jean Roty is also a stunning wine in this vintage, but perhaps just not quite as stunning as the Mazy. That said, the wine is also a bit more reserved in personality at the present time, so it may well catch the other two grand crus in the cellar here with sufficient bottle age. The bouquet is very, very deep, offering up scents of red and black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, licorice, a beautiful base of chalky minerality, a hint of lavender, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and plush on the attack, with excellent mid-palate depth, fine focus and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, structured and complex finish. We shall see how this blossoms. 2035-2120. **96+.**

2019 Charmes-Chambertin “Trés Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Roty

The extremely old vine Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Roty is also a stunningly brilliant wine in this vintage and was singing every bit as well as the Mazy at the time of my visit. The bouquet is flat out gorgeous, delivering a constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, smoked meats, woodsmoke, dark chocolate, a complex base of soil tones, hints of licorice and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and bottomless at the core, with stunning balance and grip, suave, buried tannins and a very, very long, complex finish. Great, great juice. 2035-2120. **98.**

Domaine Armand Rousseau

Cyrielle Rousseau has made another absolutely brilliant range of wines in 2020. Given how good every single vintage has been since she assumed direction of this great family domaine in Gevrey-Chambertin a few years ago, it is hard to think of any other instance where the change in generational direction of a domaine has been accompanied by such a stunning run of vintages! Of course, one has to imagine that her father, Eric Rousseau, remains readily available in his official retirement to assist if asked, as it is hard to imagine Domaine Rousseau without his steady presence in the background, but there is little doubt that Cyrielle has hit the ground running since she has taken over the reins of this great estate. I was delighted to learn that the domaine has built a beautiful new cuverie since my last, pre-pandemic visit here in November of 2019, with expanded cellars now available underneath the new winery to allow more space for the tranquil élevage of the wines. Madame Rousseau and her team were out picking beginning on August 24th in 2020 and brought in the bunches with alacrity. Yields are down here across the board, with the Mazy-Chambertin quite typical of the reductions of 2020, as there are only six casks this year, whereas nine is the customary number in a normal sized crop. I did not write down the alcohol levels for the lineup chez Rousseau in 2020, though I am sure that I asked Cyrielle about them, but they did not seem particularly out of the ordinary this year. The range of 2020s here are utterly stunning wines, with great purity to their fruit expressions- which are generally quite black fruity in the style of the vintage, coupled to exceptionally precise expressions of underlying terroir and svelte, seamless structures that promise beautiful evolution in the cellar. But, of course, one could say that about every single vintage from Domaine Rousseau in the last quarter century! The first vintage I ever tasted out of barrel at the domaine was the 1989 vintage, and to give folks just some idea of how much the Burgundy market has changed since that time, Charles Rousseau let me buy a bottle of the 1988 Chambertin from him and take it with me after we finished up the tasting of the 1989s out of

cask! I think it probably cost me about the equivalent of forty Euros for the bottle back then, and that was with paying the VAT to take the bottle along with me! I have been buying and cellaring the wines from Domaine Rousseau since that day. The 2020s will be a long-distance running vintage chez Rousseau, with only the village level bottlings likely to drink well before they are ten years old, and most of the grand crus here likely to need close to fifteen years in the cellar before they really start to blossom. Think of them as likely to age along the lines of the beautiful 1996s here, which have taken their time to reach their plateaus of maturity, but will be cellar treasures for decades to come. The 2020s will be a similarly long-lived vintage from Domaine Rousseau, albeit more black fruity and with more mid-palate depth than the lovely 1996s.



Cyrielle Rousseau under the beautiful stained glass window in the domaine's brand new cuverie.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos du Château”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

Cyrielle Rousseau commented that “we are finally starting to make some real progress with the Clos du Château bottling, now that we have been able to work the vines for several years, and I think the hard work out in the vines is really starting to show in the wine.” The 2020 Clos du Château is a beautiful bottle in the making, offering up a very pure and black fruity nose of black cherries, cassis, coffee bean, a lovely base of soil tones, grilled meats and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with lovely soil undertow, fine focus and balance and a long, suavely tannic and tangy finish. This is really a lovely *villages* bottling of Gevrey! 2027-2060. **90.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The Gevrey *villages* bottling from the Rousseau family's own vines is usually one of the most red fruity wines in the cellar, but not this year, as the vintage's imprimatur of black fruit is quite evident in this gorgeous aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, cassis, espresso, gamebird, a fine base of dark soil tones and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with great purity and focus, fine soil signature, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the long, seamless and very refined finish. This is a beautiful wine. 2030-2065+. **91.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin "Lavaux St. Jacques"- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Lavaux St. Jacques from the Rousseau family is another truly lovely example of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil tones, pretty spices and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and classy finish. The Lavaux seems to be getting better *chez* Rousseau with each passing vintage. 2032-2080. **92.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin "Cazetiers"- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Cazetiers *chez* Rousseau is another absolutely stellar wine in the making. The bouquet shows a beautiful array of spice tones to augment notes of red and black cherries, smoked meats, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and precise, with a sappy core of fruit, really lovely mineral undertow and grip, bright acids and a long, fine-grained and classy finish. Lovely juice. 2032-2080. **92.**

2020 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

I know that I am getting on in years when I taste a wine like the superb 2020 Charmes-Chambertin from Cyrielle Rousseau and comment that "it reminds me quite a bit of the 1993 out of cask, though with even better mid-palate depth" and Madame Rousseau laughs and responds "you have been coming here for a long time John!" Which is happily true. The 2020 Charmes is really a gorgeous wine in the making, and like the '93, a rare opportunity to view the prism of Charmes' *terroir* through a very black fruity light, as this wine is often very red fruity in personality. The 2020 Charmes offers up a superb bouquet of sweet dark berries, black plums, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, gamebird, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones, a hint of fresh nutmeg and a discreet framing of oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off superb, sappy mid-palate depth, with lovely focus and grip, fine soil inflection and a very long, elegant finish that closes with zesty acids and suave tannins. Great juice. 2034-2090. **94+.**

2020 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Mazy-Chambertin from Domaine Rousseau is another beautifully expressive wine on the nose, delivering a sappy aromatic constellation of black plums, cassis, dark chocolate, an exotic touch of anise, black minerality, a lovely streak of Mazy's youthful botanical streak and a dollop of oak influence. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a marvelous core of fruit, striking transparency, fine-grained tannins and a long, perfectly balanced and complex finish. This will be a very, very elegant vintage of Mazy *chez* Rousseau when it is fully ready to drink. 2034-2090. **95.**

2020 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Clos de la Roche from Cyrielle Rousseau is another beautifully suave, black fruity example of its vineyard, delivering a refined bouquet of black cherries, black plums, venison, espresso, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully plush on the attack, with excellent soil definition

coupled to a sappy core of black fruit, excellent focus and grip and a very long, ripely tannic and promising finish. Great juice in the making. 2035-2090. **94+**.

2020 Ruchottes-Chambertin “Clos des Ruchottes”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Clos des Ruchottes was simply singing at the time of my visit, offering up a stunning and sappy aromatic constellation of black raspberries, black plums, chocolate, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, spit-roasted *pigeon*, woodsmoke, new oak and a beautifully pungent topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is pure, plush and utterly refined, with a full-bodied format, stunning depth at the core, gorgeous mineral drive and grip and a long, fine-grained and tangy finish. This is a stunning young Clos des Ruchottes! 2033-2090+. **95+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The Rousseau family’s 2020 Clos St. Jacques is another simply brilliant young wine, with a touch of the exotic shading its bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, lavender, dark chocolate, gorgeous spice tones, nutty new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, sappy, deep and full, with a gorgeous core of fruit, beautiful soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and stunning length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. This has the early flamboyance that the 1989 Clos St. Jacques possessed, and which nearly forced me to drink my half case of that wine before it had reached its tenth birthday! Do not make the same mistake with the 2020 and let it rest quietly in a corner of the cellar for at least a dozen years and allow the wine reach its full cruising altitude! 2032-2090. **96**.

2020 Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

Not surprisingly, the 2020 Chambertin *chez* Rousseau is more reserved today than the stunningly inviting Clos St. Jacques, but in the fullness of time, this magical wine will reach even greater heights. The refined and very precise bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of red and black plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, a gentle touch of spice, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very deep at the core, with great mineral undertow and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a very, very long, nascently complex and oh, so promising finish. 2040-2100+. **98**.

2020 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2020 Clos de Bèze from Domaine Rousseau is another brilliant wine in the making. The nose jumps from the glass in a very sappy blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, grilled meats, espresso, woodsmoke, just a dollop of spice tones and a refined foundation of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and mineral-driven, with a sappy core of black fruit, great focus and balance and a very, very long, complex and ripely tannic finish. Another great, great wine in the making. 2040-2100+. **98**.

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The Trapet family has started a new project of working with some purchased fruit in the Côte de Beaune, which they have dubbed the “P & L Project”, named for Jean-Louis and Andrée Trapet’s two sons, Pierre and Louis. 2020 will be the first wines released from their new enterprise, with white wine bottlings made from parcels in Saint-Romain, Auxey-Duresses and Meursault “Vireuils Dessus”. For red wines from the new project there will be an Auxey-Duresses villages and “Premier Cru” bottlings, as well as a Pommard. Pierre Trapet lives in Auxey-Duresses these days, so starting to source wine from this lovely village was a logical decision and he has found some lovely parcels to work with in Auxey. As several of the P & L white wines had just been fined a day or two prior to my visit, I did not get to taste the whole range of new wines here, but the reds that I tasted were excellent and every bit as fine as the

domaine's estate-bottled cuvées and will be welcome new additions to the Trapet family's portfolio. As the family had not yet decided on the final labels for the P & L Project wines, I may not have them listed below exactly as they will appear on the final labels. The 2020 vintage at Domaine Trapet is an unqualified success across the board, as these were some of the very finest wines I tasted during my entire trip, though this should come as no surprise to anyone who is familiar with the Trapet wines in recent times. The vineyards here have been farmed biodynamically since the mid-1990s, with everything Demeter-certified in 2009, and in these hot summers of recent years, biodynamically-farmed vines certainly seem to do a better job adapting to the extremes of climate change.

The Trapets started picking on August 25th and finished up on September 7th in 2020 and were able to take advantage of the showers that popped up around the 23rd of August, benefiting the skin to juice ratio in the bunches, so there is none of the exaggerated sense of concentration to be found in any of the Trapet wines this year that is sometimes found at other domaines in the Côte d'Or. Jean-Louis noted that his two sons are lobbying to no longer produce their blended, premier cru bottling called Capita anymore, arguing to their father that the terroirs of Combottes, En Ergot and Corbeaux are all quite different and it makes sense to bottle them on their own, rather than making this one blended Premier Cru bottling. As the family's holdings in these three premier crus are quite small, it had always been decided to produce a slightly larger cuvée of Capita, rather than try to deal with micro-vinification of the small parcels, but with the purchase of small tanks specifically designed for the size of these parcels a few years ago, it seems likely that each will be bottled on its own in the very near future. In 2020, the Combottes will be flying solo, but there remains a Capita bottling as well in this vintage, now made from the parcels of vines in En Ergot and Corbeaux. But, we shall see what the 2021 or 2022 vintages will bring in this regard and I suspect we will see all of the premier crus here bottled on their own very shortly. I did not taste any of the domaine's own white wines on this trip, as they too had just been fined the day before my visit.

2020 Minima- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The low sulfur bottling of Minima was showing very nicely at the time of my visit. This wine and the Bourgogne Rouge had both been bottled in September of 2021. The Minima is nicely black fruity in 2020, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, raw cocoa, a nice base of dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured this year, with a good core, tangy acids, just a wisp of tannin and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This usually drinks very well right out of the blocks, but in 2020, I would opt to give it just a year or two of bottle age before starting to drink the wine. Good juice. 2023-2033. **89.**

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Trapet is a lovely example in the making. The bouquet is bright and classy, offering up impressive early complexity in its blend of red and black cherries, plums, a fine base of soil, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a touch of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and really shows a lovely core of fruit for its level, with a bit of ripe tannin, fine focus and grip and a long, classy finish. Again, just a bit of bottle age here will pay dividends. 2024-2035. **89.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses- Domaine Trapet “P & L Project”

The Auxey *villages* bottling from the new P & L Project is an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and sappy in personality, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, a superb base of soil tones, a touch of new leather, dark chocolate, woodsmoke and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and full, with impressive depth in the mid-palate, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is excellent juice. 2027-2060. **91.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses “Premier Cru”- Domaine Trapet “P & L Project”

I did not write down which premier cru or crus this bottling is coming from, though I did ask Jean-Louis and knew when I left the domaine. But, as this was one of my early visits in the trip, my jet lag quickly had me forgetting which premier cru vineyard(s) this wine hails from. In any case, it is an excellent wine in the making, delivering a complex constellation of black cherries, black plums, a touch of cigar wrapper, dark soil tones, coffee bean and a discreet foundation of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks, fine focus and grip, suave tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is going to be lovely. 2032-2075. **92+.**

2020 Pommard- Domaine Trapet “P & L Project”

The 2020 Pommard *villages* bottling is another welcome new addition to the lineup here. The wine is characterized by a quite elegant profile on both the nose and palate in its inaugural vintage, offering up notes of plums, black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, gamebird, bonfire, espresso, a fine base of soil tones and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very refined for young Pommard, with a beautiful core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and very promising finish. 2033-2080. **92.**

2020 Côte de Nuits Villages “Meix Fringuet”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 bottling of Côte de Nuits Villages “Meix Fringuet”, made from vines planted in 1975 in the village of Brochon, was showing beautifully as well at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep, bright and black fruity, wafting from the glass in a mix of cassis, black cherries, bitter chocolate, cigar smoke and a lovely base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, elegant and full-bodied, with a suave attack, a sappy core, moderate tannins and a long, very elegant finish. Fine juice. 2026-2050. **89+.**

2020 Marsannay- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The Domaine Trapet Marsannay is always so good that I asked Jean-Louis on this trip if the family ever held back any bottles in the cellar to see how the wine evolved with age. He laughed and said “no, it is something we really should have done, but you cannot keep everything!” I asked because I have the sense that this bottling really ages gracefully and would have been curious to see what a ten or fifteen year-old vintage of this wine drank like. In any case, the 2020 Marsannay *chez* Trapet is excellent, offering up a complex nose of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, a fine base of soil, coffee bean, just a wisp of mustard seed and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with bright acids, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex finish. This will be a great bargain in the 2020 vintage. 2026-2045. **90.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 Gevrey *villages* is another excellent wine *chez* Trapet. The nose is pure and refined, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, gamebird, a fine base of dark soil tones, raw cocoa, a touch of new wood and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, very elegant in profile out of the blocks, with a fine core, excellent soil

undertow, moderate tannins and lovely balance and grip on the focused, complex finish. 2028-2060. **90+.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Ostrea”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The old vine bottling of Ostrea, which hails from four parcels of vines that lie near the Brochon border in Gevrey, many of which were planted all the way back in 1919. These very old vines seem to be less bothered by seasons with hydric stress such as 2020 and the wine has really turned out beautifully this year, offering up a very classy nose of cassis, black cherries, espresso, grilled meats, a fine base of black minerality, a touch of bonfire and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and again, really sappy at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Superb juice. 2030-2070. **92.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée 1859”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

This is the second vintage of the Cuvée 1859, which is made from another parcel of old vines in the *lieu à dit* of Champs Perrier, which happens to be the first plot of vines purchased by the Trapet family in Gevrey-Chambertin when they moved to the village from Chambolle. Jean-Louis and his family decided to mark the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of this parcel by bottling the wine on its own in the 2019 vintage, and it has turned out so well that it is now going to be a regular addition to the family’s lineup of wines. Both the 2019 and 2020 show that this is a wine of premier cru quality without a doubt, with the 2020 having been made with one hundred percent whole clusters. The wine offers up a fine aromatic constellation of cassis, dark berries, a lovely array of spices from the sweet stem tones, a beautiful base of soil, cigar wrapper, woodsmoke, a deft framing of vanillin oak and a topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure, with lovely sappiness in the mid-palate, excellent backend mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic and impeccable finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2065+. **93.**



2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 Clos Prieur is another excellent wine *chez* Trapet. The bouquet is already beautifully expressive, offering up scents of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, espresso, a superb base of soil, grilled meats, just a hint of mustard seed, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and complex, with excellent depth at the core, fine transparency and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and great backend mineral drive on the long finish. 2032-2085. **93+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I do so love Petite Chapelle! The 2020 version from Domaine Trapet is a stellar wine in the making, offering up a very refined nose of black cherries, black plums, cigar wrapper, dark soil tones, cocoa powder, gamebird, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already showing the first signs of velvetiness on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely soil inflection, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and very complex finish. Stunning juice. 2032-2085. **94**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combottes”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 vintage has produced a beautiful bottle of Combottes from the Trapet family and I have to agree with the younger generation here that it would have been a shame not to bottle this wine entirely on its own! The wine is one hundred percent whole clusters in 2020 and delivers a superb aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, black plums, lovely spice tones from the stems, gamebird, a refined base of soil, woodsmoke, cigar wrapper and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and focused finish. 2033-2085. **94**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Capita”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

As I mentioned in the introduction, the 2020 vintage of Capita is a blend of En Ergot and Corbeaux solely this year, as the Combottes is now standing on its own. I do not know if everyone knows just how beautifully situated En Ergot is, as it is effectively the southeasterly corner of Petite Chapelle, and Corbeaux lies right alongside Mazis-Chambertin on the slope, so these two make a good blend. The 2020 Capita offers up a superb bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil, a touch of new leather, coffee bean and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long and complex finish. Fine juice. 2032-2080+. **94**.

2020 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 Chapelle-Chambertin from the Trapet family is a stunning young wine. The nose wafts from the glass in a still quite primary blend of black cherries, plums, sweet dark berries, cigar wrapper, a gorgeously complex base of soil tones, *pigeon*, a touch of mustard seed and a deft foundation of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and potentially quite velvety, with a rock solid core of pure fruit, great mineral drive and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, perfectly poised finish that closes today with a nice touch of sweet stem tones from the whole clusters. 2035. 2100+. **96+**.

2020 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2020 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Trapet is equally compelling out of the blocks. This vineyard always produces cooler fruit tones, and this is even true in the hot summer of 2020, as it offers up scents of dark berries, cassis, cigar smoke, grilled meats, espresso, dark soil tones, a hint of stem tones and a discreet framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep,

full-bodied and tangy, with a fine core of black fruit, beautiful transparency, ripe, firm and well-integrated tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Fine juice. 2037-2100+. **96.**

2020 Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The Trapet family's 2020 Chambertin is a great young wine. The bouquet delivers beautiful precision and purity in its constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, cassis, black minerality, cigar wrapper, grilled meats, just a touch of mustard seed, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and utterly complete, with a rock solid core, superb soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and a long, vibrant and complex finish. Great juice in the making, but this will need plenty of cellaring time to unfurl. 2037-2100+. **98.**

Morey St. Denis

Domaine Dujac

Jeremy Seysses had his harvesting team out early in the vines in 2020, as the domaine started picking on August 19th and had finished up everything by the 27th of the month. As I mentioned in the introductory section, Domaine Dujac was one of several estates who chose to only pick in the cooler morning temperatures during the heat spike that accompanied the harvest of 2020, so that everyone was out in the vines by 6:30 AM and finished up at 12:30 each day. Consequently, Jeremy reported that alcohol levels of the 2020s range from 12.9 to 13.5 percent octane in this vintage. Domaine Dujac is also one of the estates in the Côte d'Or that has temperature control in their cellars, so there was generally no issue with sluggish malolactic fermentations during the élevage over the course of the cold summer of 2021, and therefore, everything in the cellars moved through at its customary pace for the wines of 2020, putting racking and bottling a month ahead of schedule from a "normal" year, as the grapes had been brought in a month earlier than used to be customary in the Côte de Nuits. Consequently, a few wines had already been bottled, others had just been assembled in preparation for the mise, and others were already in tank but had their sulfurs adjusted recently and were not available for tasting. But, as Domaine Dujac has such a beautiful range of bottlings these days, deducting a few cuvées from the tasting lineup hardly puts the damper on the enjoyment of discovering the new vintage here. There was a large construction project going on at the domaine at the time of my visit, which I assume will be a new cuverie and expanded cellars for the estate, but I did not get the details on the new project during my visit and will look forward to seeing it in its completed phase next year. As was the case at so many other domaines in 2020, white wine yields for the domaine were quite "correct" in this vintage, but the reds were quite low, as hydric stress and heat-related issues kept the crop down. In proper "the Irish have no luck but bad luck" fashion, both the Chambertin and Romanée-St.-Vivant were being fined on the day of my visit and unavailable for tasting. The rest of the red wine roster at Domaine Dujac was beautifully black fruity in personality, with fine soil signatures, beautifully tangy structural profiles and superb long-term cellaring potential. Perhaps the lineup will drink a bit earlier than I am projecting below, as they were all a month closer to their bottling than when I normally taste them in November, but this is also clearly a properly structured vintage at Domaine Dujac and the wines are going to need some extended bottle age to fully blossom. I would not be surprised to see them evolve similarly to the beautiful 1993s here, which is somewhat ironic, as the '93s hailed from a cool vintage and the '20s are from a hot summer, but the two vintages do share a lot of aromatic and flavor similarities out of the blocks. 2020 is a fine, fine vintage from the Seysses family.

Vins Rouges

2020 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

I did not have the opportunity to taste any of the Dujac Fils et Père bottlings from 2020, as they were not in shape for showing, but the 2020 Morey *villages* from the domaine's own vineyards was showing pretty well, despite having only been bottled two weeks prior to my visit. The wine offers up a bright bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, a good base of soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full, suave on the attack and tangy on the backend, with a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2027-2055. **90.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Chambolle AC from the domaine was still in cask at the time of my visit. The wine is very black fruity in profile this year, like so many reds of the vintage, delivering a blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, chalky soil tones and a dollop of new wood. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and shows nice depth at the core, with fine soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, youthful and bouncy finish. 2027-2055. **90.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru”- Domaine Dujac

Like the Morey *villages*, the Premier Cru bottling from Domaine Dujac was bottled two weeks before my visit. The bouquet is quite stylish, wafting from the glass in a mix of black plums, cassis, raw cocoa, a touch of nutskin, dark soil tones, coffee bean and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with a fine core of fruit, lovely focus and balance, buried tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. 2032-2080+. **92.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Gruenchers”- Domaine Dujac

Like most of the other following red wines in this lineup, the Gruenchers had been assembled recently in tank, but had not yet had any adjustments made to it in preparation for bottling. The wine is lovely in 2020, albeit quite black fruity in personality, as it delivers scents of black cherries, black plums, *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, seamless tannins, bouncy acids and a long, beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2032-2080. **93.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Combottes was also just assembled, but showing well. The black fruity nose wafts from the glass in a pure and precise mix of sweet dark berries, cassis, coffee bean, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a good core, fine soil signature and grip, ripe tannins and a long, suavely structured and complex finish. This too will be lovely juice in due course. 2033-2080+. **92+.**

2020 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Charmes-Chambertin from the Seysses family was showing fine potential, offering a very 1993-like profile on both the nose and palate this year. The bouquet delivers scents of sweet dark berries, cassis, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a lovely base of complex soil, a touch of nutskin and a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, suave on the attack and full-bodied, with a sappy core, fine mineral drive and grip, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and very promising finish. This was just assembled in tank. 2036-2090+. **94.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “les Beaux Monts”- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Domaine Dujac Beaux Monts was showing gorgeously at the time of my visit. The beautifully sappy nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black raspberries, gamebird, bitter

chocolate, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, Vosne spices and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nascently complex, with a beautiful core of fruit, lovely transparency and bounce, fine-grained tannins and a long, superbly balanced finish. Also assembled in tank. 2033-2080. **93.**

2020 Echézeaux- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Echézeaux from Domaine Dujac was also showing beautifully, despite its recent *assemblage*. The bouquet delivers a refined aromatic constellation of black plums, cassis, smoked duck, dark soil tones, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of black fruit, buried, seamless tannins, tangy acids and superb focus and grip on the long and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2035-2090+. **94+.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “les Malconsorts”- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Malconsorts was still in cask and was destined to be racked in the coming days. It was a touch reductive at the time of my visit, and even some intense swirling in the glass never quite convinced it to show itself without reservation. The wine is quite black fruity this year, offering up scents of cassis, sweet dark berries, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones, coffee bean and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and reserved in personality, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and well-balanced finish. I have scored this wine in a range, as it was very reticent on my visit, but this cuvée has such a stellar track record here that it is hard not to imagine it eventually placing at the high end of its projected range. 2035-2085. **93-94.**

2020 Clos St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Clos St. Denis from the Seysses family is a totally refined young wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex constellation of black plums, dark berries, venison, coffee bean, a beautiful base of soil, woodsmoke and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a sappy core, beautiful transparency, suave tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. Fine, fine juice- just be patient! 2036-2100. **95+.**

2020 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Dujac Clos de la Roche is another superb bottle in the making. The wine offers up a fine nose of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, bonfire, a touch of nutmeg, a complex base of dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and ripely tannic, with a superb core, excellent mineral drive and grip, lovely focus and a long, structured and promising finish. 2037-2100. **95.**

2020 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine Dujac was also still in cask and a touch reductive, as was the case with the Malconsorts. But, the Bonnes-Mares proved a touch less reticent with swirling in the glass than was the case with the Malconsorts and eventually blossomed to show notes of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a touch of new leather, woodsmoke, gamebird and a nice framing of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and seamlessly balanced, with a great core of black fruit, fine soil undertow and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, vibrant and potentially velvety finish. Fine juice in the making. 2038-2110. **96.**



Vins Blancs

2020 Morey St. Denis Blanc- Domaine Dujac

All of the Domaine Dujac 2020 whites were assembled in tank in early December. The Morey AC Blanc was showing very nicely, offering up scents of apple, sweet quince, chalky soil tones, bee pollen, a touch of nutskin and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, long and well-balanced, with a good core, fine soil signature and backend bounce. Good juice. 2024-2040+. **90.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “les Monts Luisants” Blanc- Domaine Dujac

The 2020 Monts Luisants Blanc was really on form at the time of my visit, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of apple, quince, white lilies, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, raw almond, and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a superb core, lovely soil signature, bright, zesty acids and a long, racy and precise finish. This is excellent. 2024-2045+. **93.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “les Folatières”- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2020 Folatières from the Seysses family was also showing very well in early December. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classic blend of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, honeysuckle, a touch of macadamia nut and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and well-balanced, with fine complexity, a good core, lovely mineral drive and a long, poised and classy finish. 2024-2045+. **93.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “les Combettes”- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2020 Puligny-Montrachet “les Combettes” from Dujac Fils et Père is also a lovely example of the vintage. The wine could do with a few years in the cellar to allow some of its

secondary layers to emerge, but it will not need a lot of bottle age before it starts drinking with generosity. The bouquet offers up scents of white peach, apple, almond, a touch of *crème patissière*, a fine base of white soil tones, beeswax, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and zesty, with a full-bodied and seamless format, a good core, fine soil undertow and a long, bouncy and complex finish. Lovely juice. 2024-2045+. **93+**.

Domaine Hubert Lignier

Laurent Lignier and his harvesting team starting picking on August 27th in 2020, taking advantage of the bit of refreshing showers a few days earlier and bringing in bunches in lovely condition. The domaine's wines all ended up in the octane range of thirteen to fourteen percent for the ripest wines and not surprisingly, this is again one of the finest collections of red wines I tasted during my trip to the region. As Monsieur Lignier was away on the date of my visit, I tasted with his very capable and gracious tasting coordinator, who organized a nice, comprehensive range of the domaine's wines in 2020, which included a fine new cuvée in the lineup, a premier cru Monthélie bottling from the vineyard of Sous la Velle. Yields were quite short chez Lignier in 2020, and consequently, the wines were raised in just a touch more new oak than is often the case here, with many of the cuvées that are normally raised in twenty percent new wood seeing twenty-five percent this year, as there were spare casks to go around with the restricted crop. The 2020s chez Lignier are generally quite black fruity in personality this year, in the style of the vintage, and offer up beautiful typicité for each vineyard, suave, refined tannins, tangy acids and lovely balance for long-term aging.

2020 Bourgogne “Plain Gilbert”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne “Plain Gilbert” from Domaine Lignier is a lovely example of the vintage, offering up a sappy nose of black cherries, dark berries, a touch of balsam bough, a nice base of soil and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with good depth at the core, a bit of backend tannin and good length and grip on the fairly concentrated finish. This had already been bottled in September, as is customary *chez* Lignier. Good juice. 2024-2040. **88**.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “la Bussière”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 Chambolle “la Bussière” from Monsieur Lignier is a fine bottle in the making. The wine includes twenty-five percent whole clusters this year and was raised in twenty-five percent new oak, which was pretty much the formula for each of the *villages* bottlings in 2020 and many of the premier crus as well. The nose is very pretty and quite black fruity, in the style of the vintage, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, a fine base of chalky soil, coffee bean, violets and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and complex finish. This will be lovely with a bit of bottle age. 2028-2060+. **90**.

2020 Monthélie “Premier Cru”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The new Monthélie “Premier Cru” bottling from the Lignier family is excellent, with the parcel of vines in Sous la Velle here between forty-five and fifty years of age. The wine delivers a sophisticated aromatic constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, currant leaf, dark soil tones, espresso, gamebird and a nice touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and complex, with excellent mid-palate depth, buried tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long, classy and soil-driven finish. This is really an excellent example of Monthélie! 2028-2065. **91**.

2020 Pommard “En Brescul”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

I love this bottling of Pommard *chez* Lignier and the 2020 is once again, a very elegant and promising bottle in the making. Like all of the other wines in this range, the En Brescul was raised in twenty-five percent new oak in 2020 and included twenty-five percent whole clusters. It offers up a lovely nose of black plums, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, coffee bean and a nice framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a superb core of black fruit, excellent mineral undertow, ripe, firm tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. Fine juice in the making. 2030-2070. **91.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Seuvrées”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier’s 2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Seuvrées” is also a beautiful village wine, delivering a complex and very refined bouquet of black cherries, grilled meat, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, espresso, a touch of balsam bough and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is precise, pure and deep at the core, with excellent mineral drive and backend grip, fine-grained tannins, vibrant acids and a long, classy finish. Good juice. 2030-2070. **91.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “Trilogie”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 Morey St. Denis “Trilogie” from Domaine Lignier is also an excellent village wine in the making, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a sappy blend of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, a lovely base of soil tones, *pigeon*, coffee bean and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with plenty of mid-palate sappiness, fine soil inflection and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. 2030-2065+. **90+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 les Baudes is another very stylish example of the vintage, coupling the year’s more black fruity personality with lovely chalky soil signature, suave tannins and a very refined personality. The nose hops from the glass in a blend of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, a hint of balsam bough and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely tangy, with a sappy core, fine transparency and grip, beautifully integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex and very well balanced finish. All this lovely Chambolle needs is bottle age. 2032-2075+. **92.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The typically darker personality of la Riotte is a perfect foil for the style of the 2020 vintage, as this wine delivers a very classic and refined nose of red and black cherries, a touch of sweet dark berry, gamebird, espresso, bonfire, a touch of balsam bough and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and tangy, with a lovely core, superb soil signature and focus, suave tannins and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This is just lovely. 2032-2075+. **93.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “les Chaffots”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 les Chaffots is the first wine in the roster that saw thirty percent whole clusters included, as Monsieur Lignier really liked the ripeness of the stems in this parcel. The wine delivers a fine aromatic constellation of dark berries, black plums, venison, French roast, a lovely base of dark soil tones and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, ripe tannins, lovely balance and a long, complex and focused finish that really shows lovely backend lift this year. 2033-2080, **93.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 old vine bottling of Morey “Premier Cru” is also outstanding. This has a touch less whole clusters than the les Chaffots (twenty-five percent), but a touch more new oak at thirty

percent of the casks this year. The wine really shows its proximity to Clos de la Roche in its personality in 2020, offering up a superb bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, grilled venison, dark soil tones, coffee bean, bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and soil-driven in personality, with a lovely core of sappy black fruit, ripe tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, seamlessly balanced and very classy finish. 2034-2085. **94.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Domaine Lignier Combottes is very black fruity in personality this year, but also classically proportioned, deep and complex. The nose wafts from the glass in a refined mix of dark berries, cassis, grilled meats, dark soil tones, espresso, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and complex, with excellent depth in the mid-palate, ripe, buried tannins and a long, soil-driven and beautifully balanced finish. Another simply stellar wine from Laurent Lignier in this vintage. 2034-2085. **94.**

2020 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 vintage has produced one of the finest young examples of Charmes-Chambertin that I have ever tasted *chez* Lignier. The stunning nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, a gorgeous base of soil tones, woodsmoke, dark chocolate, coffee bean and a nice touch of spicy oak from its thirty percent new casks. On the palate the wine is pure, full and sappy at the core, with great soil transparency and grip, fine-grained, buried tannins, tangy acids and laser-like focus on the long and very complex finish. This is a beautiful young wine! It will take plenty of time to fully blossom, but it will be well worth the wait. 2040-2100+. **96.**

2020 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 Griotte-Chambertin from Domaine Lignier is another excellent bottle in the making. The nose jumps from the glass in a beautifully sappy combination of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark chocolate, a fine base of chalky soil tones, espresso, bonfire and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely depth at the core, with fine mineral drive and grip, seamless, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. 2040-2100+. **95**

2020 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2020 Clos de la Roche from Laurent Lignier was also raised in thirty percent new oak this year and included thirty percent whole clusters. It is another simply stellar wine in the making. The nose offers up a complex constellation of black plums, black cherries, roasted venison, a beautiful base of soil tones, a touch of balsam bough, bonfire, espresso and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and refined in personality, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, soil-driven and well-balanced finish. Great juice. 2040-2100+. **96+.**

Domaine Taupenot-Merme (Morey St. Denis)

Romain Taupenot has made an excellent range of wines in 2020. He started picking on August 26th of this year and reports his wines range from 13.2 to 14.6 percent alcohol, which is really quite reasonable levels of octane for this solar vintage. The one high water mark in octane is the Corton “Rognet”, which is not surprising, as this is one of the warmest microclimates on the entire hill of Corton. As I was trying to taste the 2020s, plus a range of 2019s during my visit here this year (having missed last year’s trip due to the pandemic), we did not taste any of the white wines in the cellar from either vintage, as there simply was not enough time to get everything tasted in the amount of time that I allocated for the visit. Like many cellars in 2020, the villages level bottlings tend to be a touch higher in alcohol here than either the premier or

grand crus (with the aforementioned exception of the Rognet), as the fruit from these parcels was collected after the premier and grand crus. The black fruity aspect of the vintage has found a perfect home at Domaine Taupenot-Merme, as Romain always does a few days “cold soak” for his wines, in the style of Henri Mayer, and so the style of the vintage nicely dovetailed with his typical cellar practices. The wines have turned out uniformly well, with svelte, sappy personalities, plenty of soil personality and lovely, harmonious structural chassis that will carry the wines beautifully in the cellar.

2020 Saint Romain Rouge- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Saint Romain rouge is a fine bottle in the making from Domaine Taupenot, as it delivers a pretty, black fruity nose of black cherries, cassis, woodsmoke, *pigeon* and a topnote of coffee bean. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy in personality, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, very nicely balanced finish. This is a very good value. 2026-2045. **89.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses “Premier Cru”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The Premier Cru bottling of Auxey-Duresses *chez* Taupenot has turned out very well indeed in this vintage, offering up a refined bouquet of cassis, dark berries, bitter chocolate, a lovely base of dark soil tones, bonfire, a touch of cedary oak and a topnote of balsam bough. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine transparency and grip, ripe tannins and lovely balance on the long, complex and tangy finish. This is going to be a lovely bottle in due course. 2029-2060. **91+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Chambolle-Musigny from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is a lovely wine. The nose delivers scents of black cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and tangy, with a good core of fruit, fine soil undertow, ripe tannins and good focus and lift on the long and well-balanced finish. A fine *villages*. 2030-2065. **90.**

2020 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Morey AC is one of the riper wines in the Taupenot cellars this year, as the wine comes in at 14.5 percent, but does not show any signs of *sur maturité* on either the nose or palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a sappy blend of sweet dark berries, cassis, espresso, a hint of pomegranate, dark soil tones, a dollop of cedar and a lovely topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is bright, pure and full-bodied, with a good core, lovely transparency and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, energetic and focused finish. This is lovely. 2030-2065. **90+.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

It is funny, as the 2020 Gevrey *villages* from Romaine Taupenot seems a tad riper on the nose than the Morey *villages* this year, and yet this wine comes in at 13.2 percent octane! Such is the nature of this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of ripe black cherries, plums, a touch of coffee grounds, balsam bough, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a good core, ripe tannins and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. The Morey AC seems just a touch more precise on the nose and palate than the Gevrey today, despite the former being the higher octane wine! Go figure. 2028-2065. **90.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “la Combe d’Orveau”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

Romaine Taupenot’s 2020 la Combe d’Orveau is a fine, fine example of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of cassis, a touch of black raspberry, coffee bean, a lovely base of soil tones, woodsmoke, *pigeon* and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and vibrant, with a lovely core of fruit, fine lift and focus, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. Fine juice in the making. 2032-2085+. **93.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 la Riotte is also outstanding *chez* Taupenot. The wine offers up a very refined aromatic constellation of black plums, sweet dark berries, spit-roasted venison, dark soil tones, currant leaf, espresso and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with lovely transparency, a sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is really, really good this year. 2033-2085+. **93.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

All four of Domaine Taupenot’s premier crus in the Côte de Nuits are outstanding in the 2020 vintage, with each one a quintessential example of its respective *terroir*. The lovely 2020 Bel Air offers up a fine blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, black minerality, woodsmoke, currant leaf and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with beautiful mineral undertow, tangy acids, ripe tannins and great balance and grip on the long and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Pruliers is another fine bottle in the making from the Taupenot family. The nose is pure and classic in its personality, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark berries, nutskin, grilled venison, dark soil tones, bonfire, a touch of spicy oak and a topnote of balsam bough. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly structured out of the blocks, with a fine chassis of ripe tannin, a rock solid core of fruit, fine soil signature and grip and a long, complex and promising finish. 2035-2085+. **93.**

2020 Corton “Rognet”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The Corton “Rognet” *chez* Taupenot is off by fully fifty percent in 2020, as there are three casks of this wine in the cellar this year, out of its customary six. The wine shows just a tiny sign of being the ripest in the cellar this year, as it offers up a deep and complex bouquet of cassis, black raspberries, a touch of Corton fruitcake, roasted meats, espresso, cedary oak, dark soil tones and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, tangy and soil-driven finish. This is going to be a long-distance runner and need plenty of bottle age before it blossoms, but it is going to be an excellent wine. 2037-2100. **94.**

2020 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Charmes-Chambertin from Romaine Taupenot is a beautiful bottle in the making. The bouquet is deep, pure and utterly classical in profile, offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, grilled meats, dark soil tones, mustard seed, bonfire and a nice touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already quite suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, marvelous transparency, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and impeccable balance on the long, complex and focused finish. Fine, fine juice. 2035-2100. **94+.**

2020 Mazoyères-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2020 Mazoyères is even a hair better than the Charmes! The utterly refined nose jumps from the glass in a blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, a complex base of black minerality, espresso, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, precise

and full-bodied, with a great core of sappy black fruit, superb elegance and balance, lovely mineral drive and a very long, complex and ripely tannic finish. Great juice. 2035-2100+. **95.**

2020 Clos des Lambrays- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

I joked with Romain that if the new owners of Domaine des Lambrays really wished to have a *monopole* of the Clos des Lambrays, they could just buy slices of Musigny and Chambertin and probably affect a trade with some ease with the Taupenot family! But, for the moment, we are very lucky to have two examples of Clos des Lambrays still produced and Romain's 2020 is absolutely stellar. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of cherries, red plums, dark berries, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a very complex base of soil tones, coffee bean and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully pure and transparent, with a superb core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, seamless balance and a very, very long, complex and soil-driven finish. Stunning juice. 2035-2100+. **96.**



Romain Taupenot in his very comfortable tasting room at the domaine in Morey St. Denis.

Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Ghislaine Barthod, like her husband, Louis Boillot, did not waste time getting rolling with their picking in 2020, as Madame Barthod and her picking team were out in the vines on the 20th of August of this year and had brought in the entire crop before the end of the month. As Ghislaine observed, “2020 was the first vintage ever in the history of the domaine where we completed the picking in the month of August.” The Domaine Barthod wines are some of the

most refined wines one will find in the vintage, with the range sharing a beautiful sense of sappiness to the fruit, great soil inflections, fine-grained structures and the lovely sense of effortless balance that are the calling cards of Ghislaine Barthod's wines. The alcohol ranges are quite normal here in 2020, despite some of the blazing heat spikes and hydric stress issues so prevalent in the vintage, with the wines generally falling between thirteen and 13.6 percent alcohol. There is also a refreshing amount of red fruit to be found in the range of 2020s from Madame Barthod this year, which is extremely rare in this far more typically black fruity vintage. In a year with so many wines of varying styles and success rates, it was so refreshing to taste through this entire range and find them all so beautifully "classical" in both style and proportion. With each passing year that I visit here and next door with Louis Boillot, I have the sense that the addition of their son Clément Barthod-Boillot to the team of both domaines is making the wines from both estates even finer and more precise, and it is quite easy to come to the conclusion that the stunning quality of both Ghislaine's and Louis' wines in 2020 can also be directly linked to Clément's input in both the vineyards and the cellars. My visit to the two cellars here was one of the very last of my trip, and Madame Barthod commented that the wines had started to close down a bit as the temperature in the cellars descended in December, and were showing more structure than had been the case a month before, when they seemed a bit more "seductive" in personality. So, my estimates on when they may start to drink with real generosity may be a slightly conservative, and the wines may collectively start to drink nicely a year or two ahead of my ranges in the notes that follow. But, whether they do or no, there is no doubt that these are among the very finest wines made in the Côte de Nuits in the 2020 vintage!

2020 Bourgogne "Bons Batons"- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Barthod is a lovely bottle in the making. The wine already shows a lovely sense of sappiness on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, chocolate, a nice touch of chalky soil tones and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely soil driven in personality, with a good core of sappy fruit, just a touch of backend tannin and fine focus and balance on the long finish. This is a serious Bourgogne. 2025-2040. **89.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Madame Barthod's 2020 Chambolle *villages* is truly exceptional in the vintage, as the wine couples great purity and precision with that same sense of sappiness to the fruit that is extremely appealing. The nose wafts from the glass in a blend of plummy fruit, black cherries, gamebird, dark chocolate, a fine base of chalky minerality, gamebird, woodsmoke and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again nicely transparent, with far more soil complexity than in the very good Bourgogne, a lovely core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, precise and sappy finish. 2030-2075. **91.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny "les Combottes"- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 vintage of Combottes is very strong *chez* Barthod this year. The nose shares the same sense of plummy as the Chambolle AC, delivering a fine constellation of plums, cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a lovely base of soil tones and just a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and sappy at the core, with a full-bodied format, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long, soil –driven and extremely pretty finish. A lovely bottle. 2033-2080+. **92.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Châtelots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The Domaine Barthod 2020 Châtelots is another absolutely ringing success in this vintage. The wine is more obviously floral in personality than the Combottes, offering up a superb bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, violets, roses, chalky soil tones, *pigeon* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with great backend mineral drive, a lovely core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and excellent balance and grip on the long and complex finish. First class Chambolle! 20334-2085+. **93.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “Beaux Bruns”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

Again, one is immediately struck by how red fruity wines such as the 2020 Beaux Bruns are from Ghislaine Barthod, as red fruit tones are extremely rare in this vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a beautiful blend of red and black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a lovely touch of smokiness, a beautiful base of soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, sappy and full, with excellent mid-palate depth, lovely focus and grip, ripe tannins, a sappy core of fruit and marvelous backend soil signature on the long, complex finish. Great juice. 2035-2090. **93+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Noirots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 les Noirots is probably the most red fruity wine in the lineup *chez* Barthod this year. The gorgeous nose delivers a constellation of red plums, cherries, a touch of blood orange, *pigeon*, mustard seed, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, sappy and tangy, with a full-bodied, seamless personality, a beautiful core and a long, complex and ripely tannic finish. This is the finest vintage of les Noirots I have yet tasted from the domaine! 2035-2090. **93+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 les Baudes is another absolutely gorgeous example of the vintage. The nose wafts from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, plums, chocolate, a complex base of soil tones, violets, just a whisper of mustard seed and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy in the core, with lovely soil undertow and focus, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and beautifully complex finish. Gorgeous wine. 2035-2090. **93+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Sentiers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The les Sentiers in the lineup *chez* Barthod is one of the direct influences of Clément in the cellars, as he easily convinced his mother that there was simply no point in continuing to blend this and the les Noirots into the Chambolle *villages* bottling, as both wines were certainly deserving of being bottled on their own, even if they are very small cuvées. With the short yields of 2020, there is only a single cask of Sentiers in the cellars, raised in a four year-old barrel, but it is a lovely wine. The wine delivers scents of cherries, a touch of raspberry, plums, beautiful soil tones, gamebird, mustard seed and a delicate suggestion of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and strikingly transparent in personality, with a fine core of red fruit, ripe tannins, impeccable balance and grip and a long, complex finish. Just lovely. 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “Gruenchers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

It has now been a dozen years since the Gruenchers arrived in the lineup at Domaine Barthod and it has become one of my favorite premier crus here since that day. The 2020 is truly a stunning wine, offering up a pure and complex nose of plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, lovely spice tones, gamebird, a gorgeous base of soil, vanillin oak, gentle spice tones and a floral topnote redolent of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and already quite suave on the attack, with a plush core of fruit, beautiful soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a complex, impeccably balanced finish. Great juice. 2033-2090. **94.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 les Charmes from Madame Barthod is also a stunning young wine, albeit, with a bit more of a black fruity personality this year than many of these other premier crus. The very refined nose jumps from the glass in a blend of plummy fruit, black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, violets, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil tones and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with a sappy core of fruit, great purity and mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. Another simply gorgeous 2020 in the making. 2035-2090. **94.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” - Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 les Fuées from Domaine Barthod is utterly complete and classic in personality this year. The stunning nose jumps from the glass in a youthful blend of red and black cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, a beautifully complex base of soil, woodsmoke, just a hint of mustard seed, roses and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with a sappy core, very refined tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and balance on the long, complex and mineral finish. Great juice. 2035-2090+. **94+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Veroilles”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

As is typical of the les Veroilles vineyard, the personality of the 2020 is quite black fruity this year, but this is more in line with the inherent personality of the *terroir* than it is with the vintage's signature. The nose delivers scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a hint of pomegranate, dark soil tones, venison, bonfire, coffee bean, mustard seed and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and soil-driven in personality, with a good core of black fruit, firm, well-integrated tannins and a long, well-balanced and nicely reserved finish. This is a very good bottle in the making, but as is often the case *chez* Barthod, it is a bit of a stylistic outlier this year. 2035-2090. **93.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2020 les Cras was the only wine that was showing just a touch of reduction at the time of my visit, so a bit of coaxing was required to get the wine to start to stir and show its many facets. Eventually, it blossomed in the glass to offer up a beautifully complex nose of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, currant leaf, a beautifully complex base of limestone soil, a touch of fresh herb tones and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and also quite closed down at the present time, with a rock solid core of fruit excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins, a sappy core of black fruit and a very, very long, well-balanced finish. This is the most closed wine of the range this year, but also one of the longest and all it will need is bottle age to start to shine. 2035-2090. **94+.**

Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot has crafted a truly stunning lineup of wines in 2020. Monsieur Boillot did not waste time getting started with the picking in this vintage, beginning to bring in fruit in the warm microclimate of les Angles in Volnay on August 18th and collecting the last of his fruit in the Côte de Nuits on August 28th. The results are some of the most beautifully balanced, pure and classically-proportioned red wines to be found in all of Burgundy in 2020, with alcohol levels ranging from thirteen to 13.8 percent in this vintage and the wines exuding a beautiful sense of purity, classical proportion and marvelously sappy fruit tones. Each wine is superbly reflective of its underlying terroir and one could not ask for a more refined range of 2020 red Burgundies as these lovely wines lying in cask in the cellars at Domaine Boillot. Yields were generally quite low in 2020 at Domaine Boillot, but as Louis noted, Chambolle-Musigny was a bit more

generous in this vintage in terms of bunches than was the case in Gevrey or in his holdings in Volnay and Pommard. There was hail in les Pruliers in midsummer of 2020, so the crop here was reduced by fifty percent by the storm, but as Monsieur Boillot noted, at least it was early enough that it did not affect the quality of the remaining bunches on the vine, just decimated the potential yield. The overall sense of elegance in the 2020s from Louis Boillot is quite beautiful, and in a vintage of such extremes, this quality is not ubiquitous up and down the Côte in this year- even at the most famous of addresses- and should be celebrated for the brilliant accomplishment that it is. These are great, great 2020s!



Louis Boillot in his cellars in Chambolle-Musigny.

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Bourgogne rouge from Domaine Boillot is an excellent example. The nose is pure and beautifully red fruity in personality, offering up scents of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, dark chocolate and a fine base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good core, just a touch of tannin and a long, tangy finish. Good juice. 2023-2035. **89.**

2020 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Côte de Nuits Villages from Louis Boillot is a beautifully sappy and refined example of the vintage. The nose wafts from the glass in a very pretty blend of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, a lovely base of soil tones, a nice touch of grilled meats and just a

hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely reserved in personality, with a sappy core, fine soil signature, modest tannins and a long, nascently complex and bouncy finish. This is really good. 2024-2040+. **90+**.

2020 Fixin- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Fixin is very refined and elegant in personality this year *chez* Boillot. The bouquet delivers scents of cassis, dark berries, espresso, woodsmoke, venison, dark soil tones and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good, solid core, suave tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long finish. This is not showing quite the same depth of fruit at the core as the Côte de Nuits Villages at the present time, but perhaps it has just shut down a bit more quickly in the December cellars? In any event, this too is a lovely bottle. 2025-2040+. **90**.

2020 Pommard- Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot's 2020 Pommard AC is extremely elegant in personality this year, coupled with beautiful depth of sappy fruit and precise expression of *terroir* as well. The gorgeous nose jumps from the glass in a mix of red plums, cherries, pomegranate, cocoa powder, a lovely base of soil, *pigeon* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and great length and grip on the beautifully balanced finish. This is outstanding. 2030-2080. **91+**.

2020 Beaune "Epenottes"- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Beaune "Epenottes" from Domaine Boillot is another beautifully sappy example of the vintage, but unlike the Pommard *villages*, this wine is quite black fruity in personality this year. The nose jumps from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark berries, raw cocoa, gamebird, dark soil tones, bonfire and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure, with a lovely core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, good soil undertow and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. 2030-2080. **91**.

2020 Volnay "les Grands Poisots"- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Volnay *villages* bottling of les Grands Poisots is another lovely wine, sharing the same sense of inherent sappiness of so many of the wines *chez* Boillot in this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, a fine base of soil tones, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with a sappy core of black fruit, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. This was the last wine picked in 2020, on the 28th of the month, but the tannins are a bit less suave than in the Pommard or Epenottes this year and suggest the vines really suffered under the hydric stress of the vintage. 2031-2080. **91**.

2020 Volnay "les Angles"- Domaine Louis Boillot

As Monsieur Boillot noted, this vineyard is a fairly warm microclimate and this was the reason it was picked first on the 18th of August, as the bunches were ready to go. The wine has turned out splendidly in 2020, delivering a beautifully refined nose of black cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, cocoa powder, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones, violets, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very precise, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and balance and a very long, complex and tangy finish. This is utterly refined this year. 2033-2090. **93+**.

2020 Volnay "les Brouillards"- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 les Brouillards does not share the same touch of red fruitiness found in the les Angles this year, but it does share the same sense of sappiness and supreme elegance. The bouquet delivers an excellent aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, black plums, dark soil

tones, coffee bean, *pigeon*, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with ripe, refined tannins, great focus and balance and a long, complex and very classy finish. A beautiful bottle of Volnay in the making! 2033-2090. **93+**.

2020 Volnay “les Caillerets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

Monsieur Boillot’s 2020 Caillerets is an utterly classic example of this great *terroir*. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up a blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, spit-roasted gamebird, chalky soil tones, a hint of iron, gorgeous, Caillerets spice tones, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great purity on the attack, fine mineral drive on the backend and a long, ripely tannic and tangy finish of impressive inherent elegance and complexity. Great juice. 2035-2100. **94**.

2020 Pommard “les Fremiers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 les Fremiers is another extremely elegant Pommard in the Boillot cellars this year. The nose wafts from the glass in a classy blend of red and black cherries, plums, chocolate, dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke, a nice dollop of new oak and a very complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and sappy at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, bright acids, beautiful focus and grip and a long, complex and impeccably balanced finish. Fine, fine wine. 2035-2090+. **93+**.

2020 Pommard “les Croix Noires”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 les Croix Noires is another absolutely beautiful young wine, and one of my absolute favorites in the cellar this year. The bouquet is pure and complex, delivering scents of red plums, cherries, sweet dark berries, venison, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a touch of violent a discreet framing of vanillin oak and a superb base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, tightly-knit and already beautifully transparent, with a sappy core of fruit, great focus and bounce, seamless balance and a long, ripely tannic and complex finish. Grand cru quality! 2035-2100. **94+**.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot’s Chambolle AC is a lovely wine in 2020. The bouquet is bright and quite classic in personality, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, red plums, chocolate, roses, gamebird, chalky soil tones and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and tangy, with a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long finish. Fine juice. 2031-2070. **91**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes” from Domaine Louis Boillot is an utterly classical example in the making. The nose delivers a fine constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, black minerality, smoke, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with an excellent core of black fruit, fine mineral drive and grip, ripe tannins and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. 2032-2070. **91+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 les Evocelles from Monsieur Boillot is also superb. There is just a touch of red fruit here that adds an extra dimension to the nose, as it delivers scents of black cherries, black plums, a hint of blood orange, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and an exotic topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with fine focus and grip, a sappy core, buried tannins and a long, tangy and soil-driven finish. Great juice. 2032-2075. **92**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Champonnets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2020 vintage has produced the finest example of les Champonnets *chez* Boillot that I can ever recall tasting! The stunning nose soars from the glass in a sappy blend of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, gamebird, woodsmoke, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and vibrant, with lovely sappiness at the core, superb complexity, ripe, buried tannins and great lift and backend mineral drive on the very long, focused and pure finish. A great bottle in the making. 2035-2090+. **94.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cherbaudes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The inherent elegance of the entire range of 2020s from Monsieur Boillot is most evident in this young Cherbaudes, which is all purity and politeness out of the blocks this year (and which is not often a characteristic I associate with young Cherbaudes)! The very refined nose offers up scents of sappy red and black cherries, plums, roses, a very complex base of soil tones, roasted *pigeon* and a lovely foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a superb core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and seamless finish. Fine juice. 2035-2090+. **94.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

I was expecting that perhaps the les Pruliers, due to the very shorted crop from the hail in early summer, would show more of a concentrated personality here than the rest of the range, but this was most emphatically not the case. The nose is pure and again, very refined, delivering scents of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, vanillin oak and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and mineral-driven, with a sappy core of fruit, great focus and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a very long, youthfully complex finish. Great juice in the making- just add a modicum of patience! 2037-2100. **94+.**

Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier is very, very happy with the quality of the 2020 vintage that is resting comfortably in cask in his cellars in Chambolle-Musigny. As he noted, “there is little doubt that the wines have turned out far, far better than I initially hoped for, particularly during the drought conditions of the summer.” That said, he also noted that the harvest dates for 2020 were “very alarming, as we were finished picking this year by the end of August!” He reflected that in the first vintages of the twenty-first century, he was routinely picking at the start to the middle of October, and now picking is in August or very early September, meaning that the effect of global warming has pushed up picking in the Côte d’Or by nearly two months in twenty years. As he commented, “I do not know how we will be able to sustain this going forward; we still manage to make very good wines here in the Burgundy today- albeit, a bit differently-styled than they were twenty years ago, but still very good wines- the question is for how much longer will this be possible if climate change is not addressed?” The drought conditions that prevailed in 2020 caused extreme hydric stress to the plants out in the vineyards in 2020, but they were finally relieved with some beneficial showers around August 23rd and 24th that breathed a bit of life back into the ripening process, allowing the vines to work a bit of late season magic and ripen up the tannins a bit more prior to harvest. As Monsieur Mugnier noted, “the vines generally shut down a bit in August anyway, preserving their water supply against the month of September, when it seldom rains, and there is really not all that much ripening going on during the month of August.” He continued, “before, September would arrive and the vines would pick

up again after a more dormant period in August and finish up the ripening of the bunches- both juice and skins- before we would begin picking at the end of that month.” However, now he notes that “if we continue to have to pick in August as we go forward, how will the plants adapt to having to ripen up their bunches and tannins during the normally dormant month of August?”

In any event, his 2020s are classic wines in the making and clearly this is a great vintage chez Mugnier. The flowering was early, occurring here around the 20th of May, so the likelihood of an early harvest was already in the cards in springtime. Throughout the heat of the summer, ripening moved forward, but more and more slowly as the drought put the plants through severe stress, and Monsieur Mugnier was afraid that they would have to start picking while the tannins were still not properly ripe in 2020, as the “berries were just start to show some signs of shriveling.” But, the showers on the 23rd and 24th of August brought the much-needed precipitation to add some more juice to the bunches and relieve some of the hydric stress, so that the fruit could be brought in with tannins benefiting from those few extra days of ripening after the rains. There was very, very little malic acid in the bunches in 2020 chez Mugnier, so the “malolactic fermentation was almost undetectable to us” noted Jacques-Frédéric, so that acidities barely change pre- and post-malo in 2020. The wines are quite black fruity and tangy out of cask, with their underlying signatures of terroir a bit buried at the present time, though quite evident on the backend of each wine. Alcohols are very correct, all hovering around thirteen percent in 2020 and the wines are beautifully light on their feet, though with good structure for the long haul. “This is the kind of vintage that will eventually be great” says Monsieur Mugnier, “but people will have to be patient, as the wines will take a long time to truly mature- maybe a bit like 1996, or even a great older vintage like 1937.”

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2020 Chambolle villages from Domaine Mugnier is a lovely bottle in the making. The bouquet is pure and black fruity in profile, offering up scents of plum, black cherries, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with fine depth, good mineral undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and focused finish. This is still quite primary and will need time to start to really show its *terroir*, but all of the pieces are in place for a lovely bottle in due course. 2028-2065. **90+**.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2020 les Fuées from Monsieur Mugnier is another excellent bottle in the making. The wine is nicely structured out of the blocks, with well-measured tannins and bright acids that will combine to make it very long-lived. The nose wafts from the glass in a still primary blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, raw cocoa, a gentle touch of mustard seed, a fine base of soil, cedar and just a touch of upper register violets that should become more prominent as the wine evolves in cask. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and bright, with good mid-palate depth, bouncy acids, fine-grained tannins and lovely balance and grip on the long, promising and vibrant finish. Fine juice in the making. 2032-2075+. **93**.

2020 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Monsieur Mugnier commented about his Bonnes-Mares, “each year it gets just a little bit better, which is probably a reflection of the age of the vines, and maybe someday I will make one as good as my neighbor!” He was, of course, referring to Christophe Roumier next door. This bottling has shown consistently more depth in the last decade’s worth of vintages and is truly a

great wine these days, with the young 2020 being no exception. The bouquet is lovely, offering up scents of black cherries, plum, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a complex base of chalky soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very refined in profile out of the blocks, with an excellent core, latent soil signature just waiting to burst forth once the lovely fruit recedes a bit, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully precise finish. This is going to be an excellent bottle of Bonnes-Mares in time, but it will probably need some extended cellaring before it really delivers on all of its potential. 2036-2085+. **94+**.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2020 les Amoureuses is going to be a stunning wine at its apogee, but this is, of course, hardly a surprise *chez* Mugnier. The bouquet is pure, primary and very refined out of the blocks, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black plums, a hint of hazelnut, woodsmoke, gamebird, dark chocolate, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of peonies. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and pure, with a lovely core and soil transparency, a seamless chassis of tannin, tangy acids and excellent focus and grip on the long, refined and dancing finish. Just add bottle age! 2036-2085. **95**.

2020 Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Not surprisingly, the 2020 Musigny here is going to be one of the wines of the vintage and will truly deserve twenty-five to thirty years in the cellar before drinking, so that one can enjoy it in all its splendor. The nose shows brilliant depth in its aromatic constellation of plums, black cherries, dark berries, gamebird, raw cocoa, a lovely base of complex minerality, gentle floral tones and a discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and utterly refined, with a superb core, lovely focus and vibrancy, fine-grained, but fairly substantial tannins and a long, tangy and impeccably balanced finish. The purity here is extraordinary, but this is still a very young wine and it will need to be left alone in the cellar for many years before it really starts to show every facet of its personality. 2040-2100. **97+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The inherently black fruity character of the 2020 vintage suits the Clos de la Maréchale beautifully. The wine is going to be excellent, with its aromatic constellation comprised of notes of sweet dark berries, cassis, gamebird, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil tones, a touch of coffee bean and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full, with excellent focus and balance, ripe tannins, fine depth at the core and a long, classy and promising finish. Fine juice in the making here. 2035-2080. **93**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale” Blanc- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Interestingly, the 2020 Clos de la Maréchale Blanc is going to be a charmer right from release, which is in notable contrast to the red wines in the cellar from this vintage. The bouquet is pure and already nicely expressive, offering up scents of sweet quince, pear, fresh almond, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, honeysuckle and a trace of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and already suave on the attack, with excellent depth, sound acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and very tasty finish. I would be inclined to give it just a few years in the cellar to allow some of its secondary layers of complexity to emerge, but this is not going to demand a lot of patience! Fine juice. 2024-2040+. **92**.

Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2020 vintage will be the last for long-time Cellar Master François Millet, who retired earlier this year. Monsieur Millet began his career with finishing up the élevage of the

1985 vintage at Domaine Comte de Vogüé and has been a fixture in Chambolle-Musigny for thirty-five years. His successor is Jean Lupatelli, with whom I had a lovely visit on the first of December of this year. The 2020s had not yet been racked at the domaine and were showing young and with plenty of promise for the long haul. The Domaine began harvesting on August 24th in 2020 and had brought in the last of the grapes from the Chambolle villages parcels by the first of September. Monsieur Lupatelli altered the customary order of tasting this year, as he observed that the “terres rouges soils of our Bonnes-Mares are stylistically a bit different than the other wines, so it makes sense to serve it after the Chambolle villages and then let the more similar wines follow.” But, then he threw another curve ball and served the Premier Cru bottling made from the younger vine fruit from Musigny after the les Amoureuses! I was quite impressed how well the young vine Musigny showed after the Amoureuses, but it is Musigny after all!



The new Cellar Master at Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé, Jean Lupatelli.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

I had never known this before, but the Chambolle AC bottling from Domaine de Vogüé includes ten percent from the premier crus of les Fuées and les Baudes. This got me to thinking how cool it would be to have those two premier crus bottled on their own by the domaine! The 2020 Chambolle AC is a young and promising wine, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a good base of soil, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite primary, with tangy acids, ripe tannins and very good

length and grip on the finish. This will need plenty of time, but it will be a very good bottle. 2030-2065. **90.**

2020 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2020 Bonnes-Mares from Comte de Vogüé is a big and beautifully balanced wine in this vintage, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke, a nice touch of violet in the upper register and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and beautifully sappy at the core, with firm, ripe tannins, tangy acids, fine focus and balance and a long, primary finish that closes with excellent mineral drive. This will be a long-distance runner and need plenty of cellaring, but it will be fine bottle when it is ready to drink. 2035-2100. **94+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2020 les Amoureuses is going to be a lovely wine from Comte de Vogüé this year, with the depth and muscle of the vintage nicely synthesized with the more ethereal aspects of this magical *terroir*. The nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, black plums, violets, raw cocoa, a fine base of chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy in the mid-palate, with good soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and promising finish. 2032-2100. **94+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Domaine de Georges de Comte de Vogüé

The young vine Musigny bottling of Premier Cru is quite structured in 2020, but has fine potential buried underneath. The bouquet delivers scents of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is primary, deep and full, with a rock solid core of fruit, good soil undertow, firm, chewy tannins and a long, tangy finish. Good juice in the making, but patience will be required. 2032-2085. **93.**

2020 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2020 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes” bottling is a powerful, structured wine that recalls the 1993 a bit in its profile, but with more inherent mid-palate amplitude. The bouquet offers up a youthful blend of black cherries, dark berries, raw cocoa, espresso, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, violets and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy in personality, with a sappy core of black fruit, good soil signature and grip, firm, ripe tannins and a long, promising finish. This is a fine bottle in the making, very much cut from the house style here of the last ten years, but also very much a stylistic creature of its vintage. It will take plenty of time in the cellar to start to stir, but it is going to be a fine, fine bottle when it is ready to drink. 2037-2100+. **96.**

2020 Musigny Blanc- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

It is hard to believe that the chardonnay vines here are now thirty years of age, as it does not seem like so many years have passed since they were replanted. But time waits for no one! This is going to be lovely in 2020, as it offers up a beautiful nose of apple, sweet quince, a touch of fresh pineapple, a beautiful base of soil tones, beeswax, white lilies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and vibrant, with a lovely core, fine soil signature and grip and a long, zesty and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice in the making. 2026-2050+. **95.**

Vougeot

Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Charles van Canneyt has fashioned an absolutely stellar range of 2020s, with the wines coming in at lovely alcohol levels between thirteen and 13.5 percent octane. He and his team were out picking starting on August 28th in 2020 and every bunch was brought in over the first

three days. Yields were quite short here in 2020, with parcels ranging from twenty-five to thirty-five hectoliters per hectare, depending on the plot. The malos were fairly slow here this year, but as the cellars are temperature controlled and Charles prefers for malos to take their time, the pace of these secondary fermentations in 2020 were not particularly exceptional. The wines have ended up to be beautiful, with velvety, pure and soil-specific personalities, plenty of the vintage's sappy black fruity overtones (even in the typically red fruit bomb of the Petits Vougeots), feline structures and beautiful balance and bounce for long, graceful evolution in bottle. None of the cellar had been racked yet and everything was still resting comfortably on its fine lees in its original cask. Charles had plans to start the racking soon after my visit, but the wines were showing beautifully and there was clearly no immediate rush to get started. He was a bit under the weather on the day of my visit (though only a cold, not Covid, he was happy to point out), and so I did not harass him with as many questions as usual, for it was quite clear that all he wanted to do was finish up the tasting and get back into his sick bed. It was very gracious of him to keep the appointment in the first place, given how poorly he was obviously feeling on this day.

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The Bourgogne rouge here is usually bottled by November, but the 2020 was still in cask at the time of my visit on the seventh of December. The wine is a lovely example of the vintage, offering up a deep and sappy bouquet of black cherries, blackberries, dark chocolate, just whisper of oak and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely plump at the core, with a touch of backend tannins and fine focus and grip. Good juice in the making. 2023-2035. **88.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2020 Chambolle *villages* from Monsieur van Canneyt is very elegant in profile this year. The wine delivers a perfumed aromatic constellation of plums, black cherries, chalky soil tones, dark chocolate, woodsmoke and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and still quite primary in personality, with a pretty core of fruit, suave, seamless tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and classy finish. This will end up being a very refined middleweight once it blossoms, but it will need a bit of cellaring first. 2028-2060+. **90.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

I love the vibrancy on both the nose and palate of the 2020 Vosne-Romanée from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of black plums, black raspberries, gamebird, raw cocoa, a lovely base of soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, well-measured tannins, lovely acids and fine balance on the long, focused and complex finish. Another lovely *villages* in the making here. 2029-2060+. **90+.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Au Bas de Combe”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The inherent elegance of all the 2020s at Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is very much in evidence in the Au Bas de Combe bottling this year, as this is a very, very refined bottle for a young Nuits St. Georges. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, black plums, venison, a complex base of soil, bonfire, a hint of violet and a discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with sappy mid-palate depth, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and focused finish. Fine juice. 2030-2065+. **91.**

2020 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The *terroir* of Petits Vougeots is intensely chalky in personality (as it is really an arm of Chambolle soil thrust out into neighboring Vougeot) and I have a sense that the hydric stress here was more severe than in several other of the premier crus in the domaine’s lineup this year. The nose of the 2020 Petits Vougeots delivers a black fruity mix of dark berries, cassis, a touch of balsam bough, espresso, bonfire, chalky soil tones and just a hint of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite reserved in personality today, with a good core, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and youthful finish. This is a good bottle in the making, but at least at the time I tasted it, there seems to be just a bit of its customary spark missing in this vintage. Maybe I just caught it on an “off” day? 2032-2075. **90+?**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

In contrast, the 2020 Chambolle “Charmes” from Charles was absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a sappy and pure mix of black cherries, plummy fruit, roses, limestone minerality, dark chocolate, gamebird, and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with excellent soil signature, a sappy core of black fruit, buried, seamless tannins, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and beautifully energetic finish. Classic Chambolle! 2032-2090. **93.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Murgers”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2020 Murgers was also in fine form at the time of my visit to the domaine. The nose is deep, pure and sappy, offering up a beautiful constellation of black plums, black cherries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, coffee bean, a bit of bonfire and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, precise and sappy at the core, with a full-bodied format, ripe tannins, lovely balance and focus, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, soil-driven and classy finish. Fine juice. 2034-2090. **93.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Charles van Canneyt’s 2020 Beaumonts is a fine bottle in the making, but it is a bit more primary out of the blocks than even the Murgers this year and is going to demand a bit of time alone in the cellar before it starts to drink with generosity. The bouquet is classic Beaumonts, all black fruity goodness of cassis, blackberries, espresso, venison, dark soil tones, a touch of new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, well-balanced finish. 2034-2090. **92+.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The Domaine Hudelot 2020 Suchots was a bit more expressive at the time of my visit than the hunkered down Beaumonts. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of sweet dark berries, cassis, coffee bean, duck, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones, hints of Vosne spices, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and potentially quite velvety in texture, with a sappy core, lovely soil undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. Fine juice in the making. 2033-2090. **93.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The black fruity signature of the vintage of 2020 is very much in evidence in this beautiful bottle of young Malconsorts, as the bouquet delivers a mix of black raspberries, black plums, bitter chocolate, duck, a complex base of soil tones, roses, vanillin oak and just a hint of Vosne spice in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full and already starting to get a bit velvety on the attack, with a sappy core, fine transparency and grip, seamless tannins and a long, vibrant and complex finish. Superb juice. 2033-2090. **94.**

2020 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2020 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat is a stellar example of both the vintage and this lovely and often, so underrated *terroir*. The bouquet is deep and precise, offering up a lovely blend of sappy plums and black cherries, spit-roasted venison, a complex base of soil tones, chocolate, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush on the attack, with seamless balance, fine focus and grip, a beautiful core of sappy fruit and excellent soil signature defining the long, ripely tannic and vibrant finish. A great young Clos Vougeot. 2036-2100. **95.**



Charles van Canneyt in the courtyard of Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat.

2020 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

I love Charles van Canneyt's version of Romanée-St.-Vivant and the 2020 is certainly no exception to this rule! This is a stunningly beautiful young wine, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of black plums, black raspberries, sweet blackberries, bitter chocolate, fresh nutmeg, a marvelously complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and svelte on the attack, with a sappy core, gorgeous mineral undertow, ripe, fine-grained tannins and already enormous complexity on the long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. This is a young wine, but it is already beautifully expressive on both the nose and palate! Magical juice. 2037-2100+. **97.**

2020 Richebourg- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2020 Richebourg from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat also shows stunning potential, but this wine is far more reserved in personality today than the 2020 RSV. The reticent nose eventually can be coaxed into offering up scents of black plums, dark berries, venison, a good base of soil tones, woodsmoke, coffee bean and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and rock solid at the core, with firm, well-integrated tannins, bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and promising finish. This is going to be hermetically sealed for a while, but in due course, it too will be an outstanding bottle. 2040-2100+. **96.**

Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas Méo and his harvesting team were out in the vines on the 23rd of August in 2020, trying to preserve freshness in the wines and keep alcohol levels in check by picking early. Most of the 2020 reds came in around 13.4 or 13.5 percent octane in this vintage, with just a few outliers creeping up over fourteen percent, such as the Corton “Perrières” at 14.3 percent, and probably also the Corton “Rognet”, whose alcohol level I did not ask about, but which is its customarily big, strapping and broad-shouldered example of Corton in 2020. Jean-Nicolas commented that he has had to stop buying fruit for a few of his more “entry level” bottlings starting in 2020, as bulk prices are just creeping up to the point where, in Jean-Nicolas’s opinion, they are making the wines a bit too expensive ex-cellar for their appellations. But, on the flip side, there are a few new premier cru bottlings made from purchased grapes in the Méo cellars this year, including the first vintage of Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts” (which is excellent) and Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”. The parcel in Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” that the domaine usually purchases the fruit from was hailed upon in 2020, so it was blended with some production from the premier cru of les Terres Blanches to make a Nuits “Premier Cru” bottling this year. I only tasted a couple of the white wines in the cellar this year, as most had just been racked into tank and were not ready for tasting, but both that I tried were very good. Among the reds, most were still in cask, as Jean-Nicolas reported that the malolactic fermentations were all over the place schedule-wise in 2020, with “some finishing up in January, others June and a few still not fully finished” in early December! So, bottling will also probably be spread out here, giving each wine the time it needs post-malo to settle in prior to assemblage for its eventual mise.

Vins Blancs

2020 Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes-de-Beaune “Clos St. Philibert” Blanc – Dom. Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Clos St. Philibert Blanc was showing quite nicely at the time of my visit. The bouquet offers up scents of pear, white peach, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and zesty, with a good core and soil signature, bright acids and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2022-2032. **89.**

2020 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Domaine Méo-Camuzet bottling of Corton-Charlemagne hails from two different parcels on the hill, with one being located in Aloxe-Corton and being a warmer site and the other in Pernand-Vergelesses on the western flank of the hill and much cooler. Jean-Nicolas likes the combination of the two, which gives the wine both mineral drive and nice fruit tones. The 2020 version is a fine bottle in the making, offering up scents of apple, pear, a touch of iodine, chalky

minerality, citrus peel and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a fine core, good soil signature, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the long and promising finish. Good juice in the making. 2026-2060. **93+**.

Vins Rouges

2020 Bourgogne “Côte d’Or” Rouge- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Bourgogne “Côte d’Or” Rouge from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is a good, solid example of the appellation. The nose delivers scents of ripe dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a nice touch of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, tangy and well-balanced, with just a touch of backend tannin perking up the long finish. Good juice. 2024-2035. **88.**

2020 Marsannay- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The nose of the 2020 Marsannay from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is quite 1990-like, offering up a complex blend of roasted game, dark berries, cassis, woodsmoke and a good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, closed and quite solid at the core, with good freshness and bounce, ripe tannins and a long, youthful finish. 2026-2045. **88.**

2020 Fixin- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Fixin *chez Méo* is less roasted on the nose than the Marsannay and I like it a bit better for this. The bouquet is a mix of cassis, dark berries, grilled meats, bitter chocolate and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a good core, fine-grained tannins and sneaky length and grip on the focused and vibrant finish. Good juice. 2025-2045. **89+**.

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Gevrey *villages* here is excellent on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, woodsmoke, espresso, black minerality and just a hint of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite elegant in profile, with a good core, fine soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and lovely balance on the long, complex and tangy finish. Fine juice. 2028-2060. **90+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The domaine’s own parcel of vines for their Nuits St. Georges *villages* bottling always seem to produce a very elegant rendition of this appellation and the 2020 is no exception in this regard. The wine offers up a classy aromatic constellation of black plums, dark soil tones, gamebird, coffee bean, woodsmoke and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine transparency and grip, ripe tannins and lovely length and grip on the bouncy and complex finish. Fine juice. 2030-2065. **91.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Chambolle *villages* bottling here is again made from purchased fruit, but it too shares a lovely sense of elegance in 2020. The nose wafts from the glass in a pretty blend of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, a good base of soil tones, gamebird, just a dollop of oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is young, full and tangy, with a good core of black fruit, fine soil signature, moderate tannins, bright acids and a long, complex finish. 2030-2065. **90+**.

2020 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Vosne-Romanée AC from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is again from estate-grown fruit and the wine has that extra touch of refinement as is found in the Nuits AC this year. The nose is a lovely, sappy blend of cassis, black plums, coffee bean, a complex base of soil tones,

woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure on the attack, with a good core of black fruit, fine soil undertow, ripe tannins, tangy acids and fine balance on the long, focused and still quite primary finish. Good juice. 2030-2065. **91.**

2020 Fixin “Clos Chapitre”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

I always like Jean-Nicolas’ example of Clos Chapitre and the 2020 is another fine bottle. This has the aromatic precision one expects from premier cru, wafting from the glass in a mix of cassis, bitter chocolate, grilled venison, a lovely base of dark soil tones, bonfire and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a fine core, lovely soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and youthful finish. This will need some bottle age to blossom, but it is going to be a good value. 2030-2065. **90+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

All of the Chambolle premier cru bottlings in the domaine’s cellars this year are quite black fruity in personality, in the style of the vintage. The 2020 les Cras offers up a fine aromatic constellation of dark berries, black plums, *pigeon*, chalky soil tones, a touch of balsam bough, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off fine mid-palate depth, with lovely soil undertow, bright acids, good grip and a long, ripely tannic finish. 2033-2075. **92.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Feusselottes *chez Méo* is equally black fruity to the les Cras, but it is more generous today and consequently, shows more mid-palate sappiness at the present time. The bouquet delivers a blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, plenty of smokiness, a fine base of soil, new oak and a topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, suave tannins, good acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, well-balanced and classy finish. Fine juice in the making. 2033-2075. **92+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The new bottling of les Charmes from Jean-Nicolas Méo is also quite black fruity in profile, but shares that nice sense of early sappiness that is showing in the Feusselottes today. The aromatic constellation here offers up scents of black cherries, blackberries, dark chocolate, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, pretty floral tones and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plenty sappy at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and complex finish. A fine new addition to the lineup *chez Méo*! 2032-2075. **92+.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Premier Cru”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

As I mentioned in the introductory notes, this wine is a blend of les Terres Blanches and les Perrières this year, as the latter was hit with midsummer hail and produced a very reduced crop as a result. The blend has worked out beautifully, as the wine offers up a lovely bouquet of plums, black cherries, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, vanillin oak and an exotic topnote of eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins, tangy acids and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. A lovely bottle in the making. 2033-2075+. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “aux Boudots”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 les Boudots from Jean-Nicolas Méo is a beautifully ripe and flashy wine on the nose, recalling just a bit the 1989 version in its youth. The bouquet jumps from the glass in an expressive array of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, gamebird, a very complex base of soil tones, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is more reserved than the nose might suggest, with a full-bodied and rock solid format, coupled to lovely soil nuances, ripe,

fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. I love the balance and purity here. 2033-2080+. **93+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “aux Murgers”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Murgers *chez* Méo is every bit as refined and promising as the Boudots. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a complex and sappy combination of sweet dark berries, cassis, spit-roasted gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off beautiful mineral drive on the backend, with a sappy core of black fruit, seamless tannins, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and classy finish. This is going to be a beautiful wine. 2035-2080+. **93+**.

2020 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes” from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is another fine bottle in the making. The bouquet is bright, black fruity and nascently complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, black plums, bitter chocolate, roasted duck, dark soil tones and new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a good core and soil undertow, lovely focus and a long, well-balanced finish. 2035-2080. **92**.



A little coverlet of winter show at the Château de Clos Vougeot.

2020 Vosne-Romanée “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The new Vosne premier cru bottling of les Beaumonts *chez* Méo is a welcome new arrival in the lineup here. The wine is classically black fruity in both the style of the vintage and the signature of this *terroir*, offering up a refined aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries,

black plums, a complex base of soil, bonfire, *pigeon*, coffee bean and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with bright acids, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Welcome to the party! 2035-2080+. **93+**.

2020 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas Méo's 2020 Clos Vougeot is really, really refined this year. The wine delivers a complex and very pure aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, gamebird, violets, a touch of fresh nutmeg, complex soil tones and a nice foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of sappy fruit, excellent mineral undertow and grip, ripe, buried tannins and impeccable balance on the long, suave and classy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2035-2095. **94+**.

2020 Corton "Perrière"- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Corton "Perrière" from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is a bit broader-shouldered than the lovely Clos Vougeot, delivering a bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, grilled game, dark soil tones, bonfire and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, tangy and full-bodied, with a rock solid core of fruit, good mineral drive and grip, chewy, firm tannins and a long, tangy and potentially complex finish. This is a very young wine and will need some extended hibernation time in the cellar before it starts to drink with generosity. 2037-2100. **93**.

2020 Corton "Clos Rognet"- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Clos Rognet is another big, sappy and strapping example of the vintage, but the wine is impeccably well-balanced at the same time and will only require some patience to allow it to unfurl with bottle age. The wine offers up fine aromatic potential in its bouquet of black cherries, black plums, dark soil tones, roasted meats, dark chocolate, bonfire and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality, with sappy core of fruit, firm, chewy tannins, fine soil signature and grip and a long, youthful and promising finish. The 1999 version of Clos Rognet was quite a bit like this wine out of the blocks. Given that the Corton "Perrière" is 14.3 percent this year, I have to expect that the Clos Rognet is in that same ballpark, but it is very fresh in personality. 2037-2100. **94**.

2020 Echézeaux- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Echézeaux from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is a beautifully pure, sappy and transparent example of the vintage. The bouquet reminds me quite a bit of a young Henri Mayer Echézeaux, offering up a sappy blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, a gorgeous base of soil tones, dark chocolate, roasted gamebird, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with great depth of fruit at the core, lovely dark soil tones, ripe, buried tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and sappy finish. This is simply outstanding young wine! 2035-2100. **95**.

2020 Vosne-Romanée "aux Brûlées"- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas Méo's 2020 Vosne-Romanée "aux Brûlées" is another stunning wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, precise and complex, wafting from the glass in a blaze of black plums, sweet dark berries, duck, dark chocolate, a gorgeous base of soil, a fine framing of new oak and a lovely topnote of fresh nutmeg. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, great mineral drive, ripe, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and a very, very long, complex and utterly seamless finish. 2035-2100. **96+**.

2020 Richebourg- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2020 Richebourg from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is an utter classic. The wine delivers a gorgeous aromatic constellation of plums, black cherries, cocoa powder, tea-smoked duck, a

lovely base of soil tones, woodsmoke, violet and nutty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already velvety on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely soil signature and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and laser-like focus on the long, complex and very refined finish. 2040-2100+. **97**.

2020 Vosne-Romanée “Cros Parantoux”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas’ 2020 Cros Parantoux is another stunning wine. The bouquet is pure, complex and still fairly primary, offering up a celestial combination of red and black plums, a touch of raspberry, black cherries, duck, Vosne spices, a complex base of stony soil tones and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very deep, with lovely sappiness buried in the core, exquisite mineral drive and grip, ripe, suave tannins and a very, very long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. A simply gorgeous wine. 2038-2100. **97+**.

Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugneret family has once again fashioned an absolutely beautiful set of wines in the 2020 vintage. There had been a nice dusting of snow overnight before my visit to the domaine first thing in the morning on December 10th, which set the Christmas mood perfectly for a visit to Vosne-Romanée, as the village always looks so beautiful under a cover of snow. There are plans afoot here to open a Chambres d’Hôtes right at the domaine, in the house that the family grew up in, with one of Marie-Andrée’s daughters, Fannie Mugneret, planning to take on the eventual responsibilities for running the new little hotel. I do not know the exact timeframe for the completion of this, but it will be a great place to stay when visiting Burgundy once it is completed. The Mugnerets started picking on August 24th of 2020, not wishing to let the alcohols get too high in this solar vintage and had brought in everything by the 29th of the month. The entire cellar had been racked in July of 2021, but nothing had been bottled yet and the wines were showing beautifully at the time of my visit. Alcohol levels for the 2020s chez Mugneret were generally between 13.5 and fourteen percent, in this vintage, but there were one or two wines above fourteen and the Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes” was on the low side of octane this year, coming in at only 13.2 percent. Yields were quite low in 2020, due to both the hydric stress of the vintage and the problem with one of the rootstocks that much of Burgundy was replanted on for anyone renewing a plot of vines during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This particular rootstock is failing inexplicably across all of the Côte d’Or and vines that should just be coming into their primes now are dying back and yields are falling precipitously. It is inevitable that all of the vines that were planted on this particular rootstock (the name of which I forget) will have to be replanted again soon, which is a tragedy. Among the parcels chez Mugneret that are on this rootstock is their replanted sections of Ruchottes-Chambertin. Among the shortest yields in 2020 here were the Nuits “Chaignots”, Echézeaux and Ruchottes-Chambertin, all of which came in at twenty-three hectares per hectare in 2020; even the Bourgogne rouge crop was very tiny in this vintage, as it only produced twenty-seven hectoliters per hectare! The wines themselves have turned out beautifully, with the range one of those examples found in 2020 of deeper and more concentrated wines than in many vintages, but with great purity, mineral drive and freshness to accompany the sappy and more concentrated personalities of the wines. It will be a long-lived vintage from the domaine and the wines will demand some extended cellaring to fully blossom, but they will be stunning wines when they reach their apogees.

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 Bourgogne rouge from the Mugnerets is a lovely example of the vintage, despite this being the highest octane wine in the range this year, tipping the scales at 14.7 percent alcohol. I suppose this is not surprising, as the Bourgogne vines would be the last harvested and in the heat of late August, sugars would have continued to mount while bunches were brought in from the premier and grand cru parcels first. However, the wine shows lovely freshness in its deep and sappy bouquet of black raspberries, cassis, dark chocolate, woodsmoke and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, vibrant and chewy, with excellent mid-palate depth, good acids and focus and a long, quite lovely finish. Good juice. 2026-2040. **89.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 Vosne AC bottling from the domaine is more typical of the vintage, tipping the scales at an even fourteen percent octane and offering up a superbly pure and black fruity bouquet of cassis, sweet dark berries, espresso, dark soil tones, a lovely touch of Vosne spice elements, a bit of venison and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a lovely, sappy core of fruit, fine soil signature, lovely focus and bounce and a long, moderately tannic and elegant finish. Fine juice. 2030-2070. **91.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 la Colombière was another wine with quite draconian yields in this vintage, as the crop only delivered thirty-two hectoliters per hectare. The wine is quite similar in ripeness level to the straight Vosne AC, coming in at 14.1 percent and offering up an excellent nose of black cherries, black raspberries, spices meats, a lovely base of soil tones, bonfire, cedar and an exotic touch of anise in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite refined in personality, with a sappy core, fine focus and grip and lovely textural sophistication to the tannins on the backend. Fine juice. 2031-2070. **91+.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “au Bas de Combes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

These old vines in au Bas de Combes seem to have handled the vagaries of the growing season quite well, as the wine comes in at 13.7 percent octane in this vintage and is really quite classic in personality and proportion. The lovely aromatic constellation delivers scents of dark berries, cassis, coffee bean, grilled venison, a complex base of dark soil tones, bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and quite pure, with incipient velvetiness on the attack, a sappy core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long, impeccably balanced finish. This is a very, very elegant young rendition of Nuits St. Georges and a very high quality village wine. 2030-2075. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Vignes Rondes seems to have suffered the most from the hydric stress of the vintage here, as the wine is a bit more concentrated in personality than most of the other wines in the range this year, despite only coming in at 13.2 percent octane. But, despite its character, the wine shows excellent potential, with the nose wafting from the glass in a complex blend of sweet dark berries, cassis, smoked duck, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, a touch of licorice and a nice framing of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with beautifully integrated and again, quite suavely-textured tannins, tangy acids and impressive focus and length on the very well-balanced finish. This will need time to blossom, but it will be a fine, fine drink when it is ready to go. 2032-2080+. **93.**



Five lovely ladies from the Mugneret family: from left, Marie-Christine, Lucie, Marion, Fannie and Marie-Andrée.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 Chaignots from Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg is excellent. The wine delivers a refined and sappy aromatic constellation of black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, a beautiful base of soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and sappy at the core, with fine soil undertow and grip, fine-grained tannins and lovely balance on the long, focused and complex finish. This came in at 14.2 percent octane in this vintage, but is fresh, vibrant and utterly refined in personality. 2032-2080. **93+**.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 Feusselottes is very floral in personality this year. The bouquet delivers a lovely combination of black cherries, sweet dark berries, chalky soil tones, a hint of anise, woodsmoke, cedar and a floral cornucopia in the upper register redolent of violets and peonies. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and nicely reserved in personality, with a full-bodied format, plenty of sappiness at the core, lovely soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and vibrant finish. This wine came in at 13.7 percent octane in 2020. 2033-2080. **93+**.

2020 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugnerets’ 2020 Echézeaux is a glorious example of the vintage. The nose soars from the glass in a complex and exuberant blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, duck, black tea, a gorgeously complex base of soil tones, espresso, woodsmoke, spicy oak and a touch of balsam bough in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the

core, with great backend mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins, bright acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, complex and seamless finish. A great young wine. 2035-2100+. **96.**

2020 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

I grieve that the replanted section of Ruchottes-Chambertin is going to have to be grubbed up and replanted again so soon, as that is twenty years of vine age wasted because of the rootstock issue. Sadly, this will be the case all over the Côte d'Or in the coming years. The 2020 Mugneret family's Ruchottes-Chambertin is a stunning bottle in the making, and also the lowest octane of their grand crus this year, coming in at 13.4 percent alcohol. The bouquet is young and simply beautiful to behold, wafting from the glass in a blend of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, coffee bean, a lovely base of black minerality, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very, very elegant in profile, with a superb core of sappy black fruit, fine transparency, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex finish that closes with fine bounce and grip. Another stellar example of the vintage. 2035-2100+. **96+.**

2020 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2020 Clos Vougeot from Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg is another beautiful wine in the making. This comes in at 13.9 percent this year and was cropped at thirty-seven hectoliters per hectare, which is not too bad in the context of the short crop of 2020. The wine is stunning on the nose, soaring from the glass in a deep and precise blend of black cherries, black plums, venison, bitter chocolate, a beautiful base of soil tones, plenty of upper register spices, woodsmoke and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with fine soil inflection, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, very elegant finish. Gorgeous juice. 2035-2100+. **96+.**

Nuits St. Georges

Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Bertrand Chevillon's 2020s are another of the ringing successes in the vintage, but Monsieur Chevillon was not as enamored of the vintage as one might suppose, based on the quality of the wines, as he was more concerned with how short the crop ended up again in 2020. Only the 2018 vintage chez Chevillon delivered "correct" yields here, so 2020 is one of three subsequent vintages that have all been short. As he noted, "with the very small crops of 2019, 2020 and again in 2021, we have essentially lost one full harvest in the last three." That will not make allocations any easier for fans of the domaine, who already have a hard enough time finding the Chevillon wines in the marketplace, even when the yields are normal. But, at least we can all take solace in the fact that at least the quality of the 2020s in the Chevillon cellars is exemplary this year. Monsieur Chevillon started picking on August 27th in 2020 and the wines all ended up in the 13.5 to fourteen percent octane range in this vintage. They are deep, sappy and very pure in personality, but also with firm chassis of ripe tannins and plenty of potential for long-term cellaring and will demand proper aging before they start to hit on all cylinders. The range is generally quite black fruity in personality this year, and even the premier crus that usually show plenty of red fruit, such as Roncières, Perrières or les Cailles, are black fruity in 2020 in the style of the vintage, but all the wines show beautiful underlying minerality and great typicité at the same time and seem likely to evolve a bit like the excellent 1993s here, albeit with even more depth and muscle.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2020 Nuits old vine bottling is excellent *chez* Chevillon. The bouquet is beautifully pure and sappy, jumping from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, a touch of nutskin, gamebird, a fine base of soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and shows off plenty of mid-palate depth, with lovely focus and grip, tangy acids, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. This is outstanding *villages* Nuits, but it will need some time to soften up its tannins. 2030-2070. **91.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The Chaignots is often the one premier cru in the cellars here that shows the possibility of earlier drinking, but in 2020, this beautifully sappy wine also has plenty of underlying structure and will demand some patience. The lovely aromatic constellation offers up scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with a superb core, fine soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins, bright acids and a long, nascently complex finish. This will be excellent in due course, but it is going to need plenty of time in the cellar before it really blossoms. 2032-2085. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Bousselots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Monsieur Chevillon’s 2020 Bousselots is quite black fruity out of the blocks, with the nose delivering a blend of cassis, black plums, bitter chocolate, venison, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and balance, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and still fairly primary finish. 2032-2085. **92+.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Roncières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2020 Roncières was just a touch reductive at the time of my visit, but with a bit of swirling, the wine started to stir in the glass and eventually offered up a fine nose of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, a lovely base of soil, gamebird, nutskin, bonfire and new oak. On the palate the wine is quite sappy at the core, focused and full, with fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip, impressive purity and a long, tangy and ripely tannic finish. This is going to be a lovely bottle in due course. 2033-2085. **92+.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The powerful imprint from the warm summer of 2020 is quite apparent in the Chevillon family’s Perrières, as this wine has the broad shoulders and rock solid core in this vintage that one normally associates with the Pruliers or Vaucrains bottlings here! But, there is excellent potential here for the patient, as the superb nose delivers scents of black cherries, black plums, raw cocoa, bonfire, a bit of balsam bough, stony soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite powerfully built, with a sappy core, excellent mineral drive and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, complex and chewy finish. 2035-2085+. **93.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Pruliers”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

After tasting the quite powerfully-built 2020 Perrières, I was expecting an even bigger bruiser in the 2020 Pruliers, but this wine is actually quite svelte in personality out of cask and is really a beautiful wine in the making. The excellent aromatic constellation reveals scents of sappy dark berries and black cherries, raw cocoa, spit-roasted venison, a lovely base of dark soil tones, a nice touch of new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and backend mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, complex and impeccably balanced finish. Great juice. 2035-2085+. **94.**



Bertrand Chevillon of Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils, in the cellars in early December of 2021.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

As I noted in the introduction for the domaine, the 2020 les Cailles is quite black fruity in personality this year, but also marvelously sappy and pure at the same time. The bouquet delivers scents of sweet dark berries, sappy black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird, a hazelnut, a very complex base of soil, balsam bough and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full, with a sappy core, great transparency and grip, firm, suave and buried tannins and a long, tangy and nascently complex finish. This will be outstanding juice when it is ready to drink! 2035-2090. **94+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les St. Georges”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2020 les St. Georges from Monsieur Chevillon is another superb wine in the making, sharing the same attributes of broad shoulders, firm tannins, fine soil signature and great purity to its sappy fruit component as is found in the Pruliers and les Cailles this year. The nose jumps from the glass in a refined blend of black cherries, dark berries, chocolate, a touch of eucalyptus, *pigeon*, beautiful soil tones, woodsmoke and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved out of the blocks, with a rock solid core of pure fruit, great backend mineral undertow, ripe, firm tannins and a long, complex, tangy and chewy finish. This will be a true long distance runner. 2036-2100. **95**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2020 les Vaucrains from Domaine Chevillon is another superb wine in the making. It is deep, full and structured, but also quite elegant in profile out of the blocks and will be a stunning wine in due course. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of sappy black cherries, cassis, gamebird, dark soil tones, bonfire, balsam bough, nutskin and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very soil-driven in personality, with a superb core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the balanced and very, very promising finish. 2036-2100. **95.**

Domaine Henri Gouges

Gregory Gouges organized his tastings of the 2020s a bit differently than normal, as due to the rising tide of Covid cases in November and December of 2021, he decided to prepare samples of the wines from barrel and host the tastings in a big new room that the domaine has recently built to go along with a few rooms to rent for visitors in the region. I had not seen the new Chambres d'Hôtes that the Gouges family has built, to go along with this nice large public room until this visit and this big room, with the windows open wide, was the perfect place to taste the new vintage without worries in another wave of rising Covid. There were several long tables set up, with the samples nicely spread out so that social distancing was possible and Gregory was there to field questions the entire day, during these “open house” style of tastings, which he has been doing once a week since the start of November. The Gouges family started picking fairly early in 2020, getting rolling during the third week of August in this year, so they did not get all of the benefits from the rains that fell around the 23rd and their wines are fairly concentrated in style this year, albeit beautifully balanced at the same time. Gregory noted that alcohols ended up all generally between fourteen and fifteen percent in 2020, but with most of the wines closer to fourteen and all coming across as very nicely balanced and none of them seeming to lack for purity or precision. I would have bet that the wines were all a half point lower in octane than their actual levels, based on how well they were showing. Because of the hydric stress out in the vineyards, yields at Domaine Gouges averaged seventeen hectoliters per hectare in 2020, which is quite draconian. There were several new bottlings in the lineup this year, made from purchased grapes and labeled as Maison Henri Gouges. These included a Côte-de-Nuits-Villages, a Nuits St. Georges AC bottling and a les Cailles premier cru.

2020 Bourgogne- Domaine Henri Gouges

Not surprisingly, the Bourgogne rouge from Domaine Gouges is one of the higher alcohol wine in 2020, as these vines were picked last, but though this is more than 14.5 percent in octane, it does not show it at all! The bouquet is deep and sappy, offering up scents of black raspberries, sweet dark berries, dark chocolate, a really good base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with firm tannins, good focus and a long, impressively balanced finish. Good juice, but it will need a bit of bottle age to soften up. 2025-2040. **88.**

2020 Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2020 Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits from Domaine Gouges is a lovely wine in the making, with less sappiness and concentration than the straight Bourgogne this year and a more refined example of the vintage. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark berries, venison, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate

the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with a good core, fine soil undertow, moderate tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Quite tasty. 2024-2045. **89.**

2020 Côte-de-Nuits-Villages- Maison Henri Gouges

If memory serves me correctly, this wine hails from vines in the village of Brochon. It is quite tasty, offering up a deep and ripe nose of dark berries, cassis, roasted meats, coffee bean and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely polished on the attack, with quite respectable depth, moderate tannins and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This does not have quite the mid-palate depth as the domaine bottlings, but perhaps in the 2020 vintage, this is not entirely a bad thing, as this will allow it to drink a bit earlier. A good, solid wine. 2024-2040. **88.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges- Maison Henri Gouges

The *villages* level bottling made from purchased grapes is also a quite good wine in the making. The bouquet is bright and youthful, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, a fine base of soil tones, bonfire, gamebird and a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nicely balanced and ripely tannic, with a good core, quite a primary personality and a long, promising finish. Good juice. 2031-2070. **90.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Henri Gouges

Interestingly, the domaine bottling of Nuits St. Georges AC seems a bit riper in personality than the Maison version in 2020, but equally pure and precise. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blend of black raspberries, cassis, balsam bough, espresso, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, just a dollop of new oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and quite sappy at the core, with really fine focus and balance, ripe, firm tannins, fine grip and a long, nascently complex and impressively cool finish. I did not make a note of the octane level for this wine, but I would guess it is around 14.5 percent in this vintage and yet carries itself very well indeed. 2033-2075+. **91.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Chaines Carteaux”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2020 Chaines Carteaux comes in at an even fourteen percent alcohol in this vintage and is a fine, classic example of this vineyard. The nose delivers scents of dark berries, cassis, a touch of saddle leather, dark soil tones, bonfire, venison, espresso and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows excellent mid-palate depth, with firm, ripe tannins, fine focus and balance and a long, primary and promising finish. A lovely bottle in the making, but this is going to demand some time in the cellar to blossom. 2033-2085. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2020 Chaignots from the Gouges family is the ripest wine in the cellar in this vintage, as it comes in at an even fifteen percent alcohol, but it does not show this on either the nose or the palate. How it has been able to maintain such a fine sense of balance and freshness at this octane level is a mystery to me. The bouquet is excellent, offering up a blend of sappy dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, a touch of coffee grounds, bonfire, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy, with fine focus and balance, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. Perhaps the only sign that this wine is riper than the other premier crus in the cellar this year is that it is more fruit-driven in personality than the other premier crus, but in all other respects, it carries its octane amazingly well and there is no signs of *sur maturité* or heat on the backend. 2035-2080. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Maison Henri Gouges

The 2020 les Cailles made from purchased fruit was showing good potential at the time of my visit, but it was one of the most reserved wine in the cellar at the same time. The bouquet

is quite black fruity, offering up scents of cassis, black raspberry, espresso, a fine base of dark soil tones, venison, woodsmoke and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with a rock solid core, firm tannins and good balance and grip on the long and primary finish. I did not get the chance to ask Gregory Gouges what the octane level was on the new les Cailles bottling, as a group of four or five tasters arrived in the room just as I was trying this wine and occupied his attention for a while. But, this is a good bottle in the making. 2033-2085+. **92+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Porrets”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The sample of 2020 Clos des Porrets was still finishing up its malo and grumpy at the time of my visit, and though I tried to coax a bit of nuance out of the glass with some vigorous swirling, the wine refused to budge. So, I did not take a precise note on it. I am sure it will prove to be excellent when it is in a better mood to be tasted!

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Gouges family’s 2020 Pruliers comes in at an even fourteen percent alcohol in this vintage and is a fine bottle in the making. The bouquet is deep and nascently complex, jumping from the glass in a mix of sappy cassis and dark berries, game, coffee bean, a fine base of dark soil tones, vanillin oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, chewy and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, ripe, firm tannins, impeccable balance and a long, structured and classic finish. All this fine bottle needs is some extended time in the cellar to soften up its tannins. 2036-2100. **93**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2020 Domaine Gouges Vaucrains also comes in at fourteen percent octane in this vintage and is another long-distance runner in the making. The bouquet shows enormous promise in its constellation of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive, ripe, firm tannins, tangy acids and a very, very long, focused and impeccably balanced finish. 2040-2100+. **94+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les St. Georges”- Domaine Henri Gouges

Interestingly, the 2020 les St. Georges *chez* Gouges is a touch higher in alcohol than a few of these other premier crus, as the wine tips the scales at 14.5 percent this year. However, despite being a touch riper than the Vaucrains, it is equally pure and sappy in personality, offering up scents of black cherries, a hint of black raspberry, sweet blackberries, gamebird, coffee bean, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with fine mineral undertow, firm, chewy tannins and impressive focus and balance on the long, complex and very promising finish. This is every bit as cool on the backend as the Pruliers or Vaucrains this year, despite being a half point higher in octane. Fine juice. 2040-2100+. **94+**.

Vins Blancs Chez Gouges

2020 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2020 Bourgogne Blanc was showing very nicely at Domaine Gouges on December 8th. The wine is bright, zesty and beautifully balanced, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, sweet quince, chalky soil tones, fruit blossoms and a touch of lime peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a good core, lovely shape and bounce, tangy acids and a long, complex and promising finish. Good juice. 2023-2035+. **89**.

Domaine Alain Michelot

*Elodie Michelot and her team got started picking her pinot noir vines on August 28th in 2020, or one day later than her neighbor Bertrand Chevillon. She had been out a week earlier to collect the chardonnay for the domaine's lovely Nuits. St. Georges "la Perrière Noblot" Blanc bottling. Like many other domaines, the harvest team was only out in the vines gathering bunches during the cooler morning hours, with harvest starting at 6:30 AM each day and ending at 12:30, so that the baking heat of the afternoon was missed. Yields chez Michelot in 2020 are fifty percent of a normal crop, as hydric stress really took its toll and there was "very little juice in the berries when we pressed the bunches this year" report Madame Michelot, despite the bunches looking pretty normal in size in this vintage. So these have turned out to be pretty concentrated examples of the 2020 vintage, with copious depth of fruit, plenty of tannin, acidity and varying ranges of alcohol, with some wines around fourteen percent and a few creeping up close to fifteen percent octane in this vintage. The funny thing is that some of the ripest 2020s from Madame Michelot are also perfectly balanced and do not show any signs of *sur maturité* or backend heat, just a bit more of everything in terms of depth, tannin, acidity and stuffing. Others do show some of the more "solar aspects" of this vintage. As is often the case here in November, a few of the 2020 wines were just finishing up their malos and still a bit unsettled for tasting, whereas others were in fine form and singing. There are only two barrels of Les St. Georges in the Michelot cellars this year, as the yields here were particularly draconian in 2020. It is a fascinating vintage chez Michelot, as the wines are deep, sappy and most often, quite poised structurally and give no sense of their fairly generous levels of octane, with only one or two seeming slightly overripe in personality. The others, who probably fall around 14.5 percent alcohol (there had been no lab analysis yet on the wines' final octane levels), were impressively pure, structured and soil-driven in personality, and are destined to be outstanding once they soften up their tannins with sufficient bottle age. The concentrating effects of the vintage have given the entire range lovely acidity in 2020, which gives the wines a bounce of vibrancy on the backend that is most attractive. This is a very successful vintage from Domaine Michelot, with a couple of wines that may end up a tad too ripe for my tastes, but with the vast majority absolutely stellar.*

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Alain Michelot

Not surprisingly, the Bourgogne rouge bottling from Domaine Michelot is one of the ripest wines in the cellar this year, as these grapes were collected at the end of the harvest. But, despite the wine being nearly fifteen percent alcohol, it is actually quite good, with a fine sense of balance that I find mystifying in this vintage, as intuitively, it seems the wine should show some heat on the palate at this octane level. But, it does not! The bouquet is deep and sappy, offering up notes of black cherries, sweet dark berries, dark chocolate, venison and a nice touch of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe, full-bodied and tangy, with a bit of backend tannin and impressive length and grip. This is a powerful example of Bourgogne that will need some time in the cellar to soften up, but the wine is quite good! 2026-2040. **87.**

2020 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Morey *villages* bottling from Domaine Michelot seems to show just a bit of *sur maturité* in its aromatic constellation, but is cool and classy on the palate and there is no signs of overripeness to the flavors of the wine. I cannot figure out how this has come to pass, but it augurs well for the wine's evolution in bottle, as I would expect it to probably end up like a more muscular version of a 1990. The nose offers up notes of framboise, black cherries, chocolate,

dark soil tones, grilled game and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, chewy and quite precise in personality, with a sappy core, good soil signature and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, tangy finish. This is going to turn out quite tasty with bottle age, though it will be a big wine. 2030-2065. **89.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Nuits old vine bottling has turned out superbly well and I would suspect that this was picked a few days ahead of the Morey AC, as there are no signs of *sur maturité* here on the nose. The bouquet delivers a deep, sappy and quite classic aromatic profile of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine full-bodied, pure and nicely soil-driven, with a beautiful core of sappy fruit, bright acids, ripe, buried tannins and lovely balance on the long and complex finish. This will need time to blossom, but it will be quite classical in style when it reaches full maturity. Fine juice. 2032-2065+. **91.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Champs Perdrix”- Domaine Alain Michelot

I do not know why I had never known this previously, but there are two distinct bottlings of Champs Perdrix in the Michelot cellars, as part of the vineyard is only designated as *villages* in the AOC system, while most of it is premier cru. This is similar to Clos Prieur in Gevrey, but as Elodie observes, “there is no obvious reason why one section is *villages*, as the slope is the same, the soil is the same and there is not path through the vineyard to mark off one sector from the rest of the vineyard, and yet this part has always been ranked as *villages*.” So, the domaine bottles the two parts separately and I finally had a chance to try both during my visit here this year. The Champs Perdrix AC is an excellent offering up scents of sappy black cherries and cassis, dark soil tones, gamebird, bonfire, dark chocolate and a nice touch of violets in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and chewy on the backend, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature and grip, ripe tannins and fine length on the well-balanced finish. A very strong *villages*! 2030-2070. **91+.**

2020 Morey St. Denis “les Charrières”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Morey “les Charrières” was still a bit grumpy from its recently finished malo and still had a bit of gas on the palate. The bouquet is bright and sappy, offering up scents of black fruit, gamebird, a good base of soil, a touch of oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure, with plenty of depth at the core, ripe tannins and a long tangy finish. The wine is still too out of sorts to score precisely, but this is nicely fresh, deep and should turn out very well indeed. 2033-2070+. **91-92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “la Richemone”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 la Richemone was one of those perplexing wines in the Michelot cellars this year, as the wine is fresh, sappy and beautifully balance, and yet, Elodie reports its alcohol is nearly fifteen percent in this vintage! This was most assuredly not evident at the time I tasted the wine, as it offers up a lovely, sappy nose of black raspberries, black cherries, coffee bean, venison, a fine base of soil tones, bonfire and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with tangy acids, ripe, chewy tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, sappy and nascently complex finish. This is a wine that is very much a creature of its vintage, and yet it is very good and shows no issues with overripeness on either the nose of the palate! 2033-2070+. **92.**

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Champs Perdrix” 1er Cru- Domaine Alain Michelot

It is not surprising that Elodie Michelot does not blend the two part of Champs Perdrix together, as her vines in the premier cru section were all planted in 1937! This is truly stunning

wine in 2020, offering up a beautiful bouquet of sweet dark berries, black cherries, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a beautifully refined base of minerality, an early touch of black truffle and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, sappy and full-bodied, with excellent mid-palate depth from the old vines, ripe, buried tannins, tangy acids and great focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is stellar in 2020. 2035-2085. **93+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 les Cailles is lower in octane than the la Richemone and seems destined to be one of the most classically-styled and high quality wines in the cellar this year. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a pure and refined blend of red and black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a refined base of soil, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish of impressive balance. This is fine juice in the making. 2035-2085. **93**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Chaignots from Elodie Michelot is a tad riper than the les Cailles, but again, very pure and sappy, rather than showing scents of overripeness. The nose delivers a combination of sweet dark berries, black cherries, roasted gamebird, a fine base of soil, plenty of smokiness and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, sappy and very long, with bright acids, a beautiful core of fruit, good soil undertow and a balance, ripely tannic and promising finish. 2033-2080. **92**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Vaucrains *chez* Michelot is another very pure, well-proportioned example of the vintage. It is a deep and powerful wine that will take plenty of time in the cellar to blossom, but it has all of the constituent components in place to eventually drink with distinction. The youthful bouquet offers up scents of cassis, dark berries, roasted venison, coffee bean, a great base of soil, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and rock solid at the core, with fine mineral drive and grip, ripe, chewy and buried tannins and a long, tangy and structured finish. In due course, this will be outstanding. 2037-2090. **93+**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The Les St. Georges was patently out of sorts at the time of my visit, so I did not take a note on the wine.

2020 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Alain Michelot

I love the Michelot family’s Clos Vougeot, and the 2020 is going to be an outstanding example of the vintage down the road, but it was one of the wines that finished up its malo a bit later than most and still had just a touch of carbon dioxide in solution at the time of my visit. With some vigorous swirling, the wine was able to show itself to some extent, delivering a bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, roasted game, bonfire, a superb base of soil, raw cocoa and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and tangy, with a sappy core of perfectly ripe fruit, firm, buried tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Given that this wine was not yet fully out from the aftermath of its malolactic fermentation, I have scored it within a range, but would expect it to earn the upper number once it is ready to drink. 2040-2100+. **94-95**.

2020 Nuits St. Georges “la Perrière Noblot” Blanc- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2020 Nuits St. Georges “la Perrière Noblot” Blanc from Domaine Michelot is a beautiful example of the vintage. It is bright, vibrant and zesty on the nose, jumping from the glass in a mix of pear, tangerine, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, fruit blossoms and a deft

framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very nicely balanced, with good, solid acidity, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This has a better spine of acidity than the 2019 version and is likely to last quite a bit longer in bottle, despite it also being a fairly ripe wine. Good juice. 2022-2035+. **92.**

Pernand-Vergelesses

Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

Simon Rollin has made a fine range of both reds and whites in the 2020 vintage, but to his mind, the whites are a step ahead of the reds in this vintage. Despite having starting picking around the 20th of August and finishing everything up by the 28th of the month (with the exception of the Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc, which was picked on September 7th due to the very cool microclimate for these vines), Monsieur Rollin has ended up with red wines in 2020 that are actually about a full point higher in octane level than was the case with his red wines in 2019. The 2019 reds here (which are excellent and will be covered in the next issue) all range between thirteen and 13.5 percent alcohol, whereas the 2020s are generally between fourteen and 14.5 percent. However, the Domaine Rollin 2020 reds are one of those sets of wines I found on this trip that actually show impeccable balance and freshness at these slightly higher octane levels, and they have fine structures for long-term cellaring. Like so many collections in 2020, they are quite black fruity wines this year, but with good acids, ripe tannins, fine soil signatures underneath and no signs of sur maturité in either the aromatics or flavors, and they will be very good bottles in due course. All of the red 2020s had been racked and assembled in October and will be bottled in February and March of 2022. They are a good set of wines, but, as Simon Rollin notes, the truly stunning wines in the cellar from 2020 are the white wines here, which are the finest I have ever had the pleasure to taste chez Rollin during my visits to the cellars in Pernand. The white wines are deep, brimming with perfectly ripe fruit, have gorgeous presentations of their underlying terroir and impeccable structural balance and tangy acids that will carry them for many, many years in bottle. All had been bottled over the autumn, with the Aligoté, Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc, Pernand Blanc and Pernand “les Cloux” bottled in September; the Sous Frétille and Corton-Charlemagne had been bottled in mid-November, two weeks before my visit. It is hard not to share Simon Rollin’s sentiments that “2020 is a great, great vintage for white wines in the Côte d’Or.”

Vins Blancs

2020 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne Aligoté from Domaine Rollin is a lovely example of this varietal. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classic blend of fresh lime, quince, chalky minerality and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and zesty, with a really good core of fruit, fine transparency and grip and a long, bouncy finish. 2022-230+. **88.**

2020 Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The Rollins’ Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc is made from vines that lie on the far western end of Pernand and continue on into the commune of Echevronne. This is a cool and windy *terroir* and these vines are always the last picked by the domaine. The 2020 version was showing very well at the time of my visit, having been bottled right at the start of September and now showing a lovely nose of pear, apple, salty soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, good soil undertow and a

long, crisp and nicely reserved finish that augurs very well for its evolution in bottle. Good juice. 2023-2035. **89.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc AC was given ten months of barrel aging this year, with ten percent of the casks new. This too was bottled at the start of September and was absolutely singing on the last day of November. The complex nose jumps from the glass in a vibrant blend of lemon, pear, fresh almond, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, incipient notes of *crème patissière* and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and racy, with excellent focus and cut, a beautiful core of fruit and fine mineral drive on the long, complex and vibrant finish. This is a great, great value this year! 2023-2040+. **91.**



Simon Rollin in his family's tasting room at the domaine in Pernand-Vergelesses.

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Cloux” Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 les Cloux is also an excellent wine in this lovely vintage. The wine was bottled at the same time as the AC, but is more notably structured and hunkered down out of the blocks and will require a bit of bottle age before it starts to stretch its wings. The bouquet is pure and precise, delivering scents of apple, pear, a touch of clementine, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a nice topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush at the core, with fine soil signature and grip, a good girdle of acidity and fine focus and length on the well-balanced and youthful finish. Les Cloux is a warmer microclimate, as it is

sheltered a bit from the wind, and so it gets plenty of mid-palate depth in top flight years such as 2020. Fine juice in the making. 2026-2050. **92+**.

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “Sous Frétille” Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 Sous Frétille is going to be an absolutely stellar wine from the Rollins this year and will end up showing more breed and depth at maturity than half of the Corton-Charlemagne bottlings out on the market! The bouquet is naturally a bit more reserved than the les Cloux, having been bottled much more recently, but still clearly shows its beautiful potential in its blend of apple, pear, *crème patissière*, fresh almond, a gorgeous base of chalky minerality, orange blossoms and a refined foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise, rock solid and full, with great cut and grip, laser-like focus and a very, very long, perfectly balanced finish that closes with superb mineral drive. I love this wine every year, but the 2020 is really special. 2026-2055. **94**.

2020 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Rollin is a truly stunning young wine. The youthful nose is pure, refined and oh, so promising, as it wafts from the glass in a blend of pear, fresh lime, apple, just a hint of the pastry cream to come, kaleidoscopic limestone minerality, fresh almond, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off stunning depth in the mid-palate, with excellent focus and cut, zesty acids, gorgeous mineral drive and a very, very, very long, perfectly balanced finish. All that is required is the requisite patience to not touch a bottle until this magical wine has reached cruising altitude! 2029-2075. **97+**.

Vins Rouges

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 Pernand-Vergelesses AC comes in just around fourteen percent octane in this vintage and was showing fine potential at the time of my visit. The bouquet has a nice (and fairly rare) touch of red fruit tones in its blend of red and black cherries, venison, woodsmoke, a lovely base of dark soil tones and just a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and very nicely balanced, with a good core, ripe tannins and a long, focused and quite promising finish. This will need some extended bottle age, but will be a fine *villages* once it is ready to drink. 2030-2065. **89+**.

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 les Vergelesses from the Rollin family is a fine bottle in the making, with more of the black fruity personality that is so emblematic of this vintage. The nose jumps from the glass in a complex mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, stony minerality, a nice touch of spice tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a sappy core of fruit, fine soil undertow, chewy tannins and a long, complex finish that is impressively light on its feet. Good juice. 2030-2075. **92**.

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Fichots”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2020 les Fichots from Domaine Rollin is another fine bottle in the making, but it is a bit more structured out of the blocks and will need a couple more years in the cellar than the les Vergelesses before it starts to drink with generosity. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of cassis, dark berries, espresso, a complex base of soil tones, grilled game, bonfire, a touch of cedar and a nice dollop of sweet stem tones from the whole clusters in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with a rock solid core, fine

transparency and grip, ripe tannins and a long, vibrant and still quite primary finish. 2032-2075+. **92+.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “Île de Vergelesses”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The Île de Vergelesses from the Rollins is an outstanding bottle in 2020, but like the Fichots, it will demand a bit of patience before it starts to drink well. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of cassis, black cherries, gamebird, bitter chocolate, stony soil tones, woodsmoke and a topnote of fresh thyme. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and beautifully defined by its soil tones, with a sappy core of black fruit, ripe, buried tannins, tangy acids and lovely focus and balance on the long, complex and classy finish. 2033-2080. **93.**

Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

Chisa Bize and her harvesting team were out early in the vines in 2020, getting started with the picking on August 17th of this year. Consequently, her wines came in a bit lower in alcohol than the corresponding bottling in 2019 from the domaine, with alcohols all generally in the low to mid-thirteen percent range. The one outlier in this regard in 2020 was the Grands Liards, which is the ripest wine in the cellars this year and tips the scales at 13.9 percent. The 2020 vintage will be the last for some years of the domaine’s beautiful premier cru bottling of les Guettes, as these old vines (planted in 1960) had to be grubbed up after the vintage and will be replanted after a few years of the parcel lying fallow. Happily, it is a great vintage of les Guettes to go out with, as the 2020 has turned out splendidly. The entire range of red wines chez Bize is nicely black fruity in the style of the vintage, but also quite svelte, soil-driven and nicely structured out of the blocks, with classical aesthetic sensibilities and the potential for long, lovely evolutions in bottle. They show beautiful purity to their fruit components, just a touch of sappiness and great fidelity to their underlying soils. I did not have the opportunity to taste the 2020 Vergelesses Blanc or Corton-Charlemagne this year, but the other white wines in the range were showing beautifully at the time of my visit on December 7th and I am sure the vintage is equally successful for the white wines chez Bize as it is for the reds.

Vins Blancs

2020 Bourgogne Blanc “Champlains”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Champlains bottling of Bourgogne Blanc from Chisa Bize is a very pretty wine, with a nice plump core and plenty of early generosity in the offering. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, passion fruit, a hint of pineapple, chalky soil tones and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly concentrated in style for this cuvée, with a good core, bright acids and a long, ripe and complex finish. This comes in at thirteen percent in 2020 and will drink very well right from the start. 2022-2040. **89.**

2020 Bourgogne Blanc “Perrières”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne “Perrières” is a lovely bottle in the making, with a bit more mineral drive in its personality than the more fruit-driven Champlains. The beautiful bouquet offers up a youthful blend of pear, lemon peel, apple, a fine base of limestone minerality, white lilies and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely racy, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, vibrant and well-balanced finish. This will definitely benefit from a couple of years in the cellar, as it is a bit more reserved in personality than the Champlains. 2024-2040+. **90.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc from Domaine Bize is a beautiful wine in the making and has to be one of the best white Burgundy values to be found in the market this year. The wine is vibrant and classy on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, white peach, an exotic touch of casaba melon, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and racy, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil signature, lovely focus and balance and a long, bouncy finish that closes with excellent minerality. Fine, fine juice. 2024-2045+. **92.**



Vins Rouges

2020 Bourgogne Rouge “Perrières”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne Rouge “Perrières” from the Bize family is another lovely bottle in the making. The wine delivers a nose of dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a good base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with a good core, tangy acids and a long, youthful finish. This is another quite strong example of Bourgogne rouge in 2020 that will demand a bit of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity, but will be a fine example once it is ready to go. 2026-2045. **89.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Domaine Bize Savigny-lès-Beaune AC is a fine *villages* in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke,

a touch of currant leaf, dark soil tones and a dollop of dark chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a good core of black fruit, with ripe, fairly firm tannins, good focus and grip, tangy acids and lovely length and grip on the vibrant and well-balanced finish. Good juice in the making here. 2028-2065. **90.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Grands Liards”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Grands Liards is a very good bottle in the making, and the 13.9 percent octane does not come accompanied by any sense of *sur maturité* on either the nose or palate, just a rock solid core of fruit and plenty of structural conviction. The bouquet is really very lovely, offering up scents of cassis, dark berries, roasted *pigeon*, dark chocolate, Savigny spice tones and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and concentrated at the core, with firm tannins, tangy acids and lovely purity on the long, chewy finish. This will need a full decade or so before it even starts to blossom. 2030-2070. **90+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Fournaux”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 les Fournaux from Chisa Bize is a beautiful wine in the making and is really quite expressive out of the blocks. The bouquet delivers a fine combination of cassis, dark berries, currant leaf, coffee bean, woodsmoke, gamebird and a complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with lovely focus and grip, tangy acids and a long, ripely tannic and beautifully balanced finish. This is really lovely in 2020. 2032-2080. **92.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Marconnets”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Marconnets” from Domaine Bize is another excellent example of the vintage. The bouquet offers up plenty of black fruity tones in its mix of cassis, blackberries, roasted meats, dark soil tones, currant leaf, woodsmoke, a nice touch of sweet stem tones and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full-bodied, with a fine core of sappy black fruit, excellent soil undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. This is another first class Savigny premier cru. 2033-2080. **92.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Talmettes”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

Chisa Bize’s 2020 les Talmettes is really special this year, as the wine has absolutely excelled in this vintage. Madame Bize notes that Talmettes and Vergelesses share very similar soils, but the expositions of the two vineyards is quite different, and much of their varying personalities can be attributed to Vergelesses far more exposed to north winds and hence, far more structurally unforgiving in its youth than the Talmettes. In any case, the 2020 Talmettes is simply gorgeous this year, offering up a very refined bouquet of black cherries, cassis, coffee bean, gamebird, currant leaf, a beautiful base of dark soil tones and just a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very detailed out of the blocks, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2032-2080. **93+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Domaine Bize Vergelesses is another beautiful wine in the making, but as Madame Bize noted, it will need a few more years in the cellar to emerge from behind its youthful structural chassis. The bouquet is splendid, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, black plums, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a touch of violet, a complex base of soil, a touch of sweet stem tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a great core of black fruit, firm, chewy tannins and impressive backend mineral drive on the long, tangy and youthful finish. 2035-2090. **93+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The last vintage for these old vines in Guettes will be one to remember, as this is a beautiful wine in the making, albeit, a bit more reserved out of the blocks than either the Talmettes or Vergelesses. The superb nose delivers an aromatic constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, espresso, spit-roasted gamebird, a beautifully complex base of dark soil tones, a touch of stems, a discreet framing of new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and closed today, with a lovely core of fruit waiting in the wings, excellent soil signature, ripe, beautifully-integrated tannins and fine focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and superbly balanced finish. 2035-2090. **93+**.

2020 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2020 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Simon Bize et Fils is a stunning young wine. The bouquet is deep, pure and already beautifully expressive, delivering scents of sweet blackberries, plums, black cherries, a complex base of dark soil tones, gamebird, espresso, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and seamless, with a gorgeous core of fruit, outstanding soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced, complex finish. This is a great young bottle of Latricières. 2037-2100. **96**.

Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume Camus has made absolutely splendid wines in 2020, with beautiful transparent personalities that are very much emblematic of their underlying terroirs, and what is extremely rare in this vintage, plenty of red fruit tones to augment the more generally black fruit found in this vintage. He began picking on August 27th, as he wished to “not let the sugars get too high from the intense heat at the time of harvest.” He has started doing something that strikes me as highly intelligent to try and offset some of the effects of global warming, as he now leaves one or two eyes more on his cane each spring during pruning, hoping to avert some of the concentrating effects that one finds routinely in the very hot summers that have blanketed Burgundy in every year since 2015, with the exception of the cold, damp summer of 2021. His view (if my French was sufficient to understand his philosophy precisely) is that it is better these days to spread the energy of the vines out a bit more with a few more bunches of grapes, so as to offset some of the ill effects from the hot summers in the region in this age of global warming, as with a bit more bunches on the vine, the sugars do not climb with quite the same alacrity in the baking heat as they do with a smaller cropload. In 2020, this practice seems to have worked to perfection, as his red wines range from thirteen to 13.6 percent octane, which is really quite low by the standards of the vintage. He has also been able to find plenty of red fruit tones in his wines, which is virtually impossible at most other addresses in 2020, and maybe the modestly higher yields due to the slightly longer canes at pruning are a good way to tackle some of the deleterious effects of climate change in the vineyards of Burgundy these days. His wines were also showing far greater definition of terroir at this point in their evolutions than was the case in some of the cellars I visited on this trip, which again may be a nod to the efficacy of his new pruning approach in this era of climate change. The red wines here were all still in cask at the time of my visit on the 10th of December, with racking and bottling scheduled for early in the new year.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc “les Goudelettes”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2020 Savigny Blanc was already assembled at the time of my visit and was scheduled to be bottled the second week of January. The wine was showing very well indeed, offering up scents of green apple, quince, lime blossoms, a touch of fresh almond, chalky soil tones and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, complex and zesty, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, poised and vibrant finish. Guillaume noted that he is raising this bottling in twenty-five percent new oak these days, but with most of the casks being five hundred liters in size. A lovely bottle. 2022-2035+. **91.**

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The Camus-Bruchon 2020 Bourgogne rouge is really good this year and a great bargain. The bouquet is deep and sappy, delivering a fine mix of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, a nice touch of Savigny spices and a lovely base of soil. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and tangy, with a good core, a touch of backend tannin and a long, well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2025-2040. **89.**

2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune “le Grand Soussy”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune from Guillaume Camus was raised all in five hundred liter barrels this year, with all of them two years of age. The wine offers up a refined, nicely red fruity bouquet of cherries, a touch of raspberry, plum, dark soil tones, cloves, violets, bitter chocolate and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured out of the blocks, with a good core, fine soil signature and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant finish. This will need a few years in the cellar to start to blossom. 2025-2045. **89+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Cuvée Reine Joly”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Monsieur Camus is also using more *demi-muids* for his Cuvée Reine Joly bottling of Savigny *villages*, as in 2020 half of the bottling was raised in these six hundred liter barrels. The other half was raised in traditional two hundred twenty-eight liter Burgundy barrels, with only a couple of them new. The resulting wine is excellent, delivering a very fine aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, red currants, gamebird, bonfire, a very good base of soil tones, Savigny spice, violets and a touch of cocoa powder in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a lovely core, ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, bright and very well balanced finish. This is fairly structured out of the blocks and will need some bottle age to soften up, but it is going to be excellent *villages*. 2027-2060+. **91.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Pimentiers” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2020 Pimentiers old vine bottling was raised in fifteen percent new oak this year, with an additional fifteen percent “one wine” barrels and the rest considerably older. The wine is beautiful, showing superb precision on the nose as it jumps from the glass in a mix of cherries, red plums, just a hint of currant, dark soil tones, a fine array of spices, woodsmoke and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth of sappy red fruit, stony minerality, ripe tannins and a long, well-balanced and very promising, complex finish. 2030-2075+. **92.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Grands Liards” V. V.- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The *lieu à dit* of Grands Liards must be one of the warmer microclimates in Savigny, as this is the highest octane wine in the Camus-Bruchon cellars this year at 13.6 percent, and the same thing was true of Chisa Bize’s version as well in her lineup of 2020s. This wine was raised in the same cask regimen as the Pimentiers in 2020 and has also turned out beautifully, delivering a bouquet of cherries, plums, pomegranate, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, lovely soil tones, a touch of vanillin oak and a spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock

solid at the core, with fine focus and balance, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. This will take a year or two longer to blossom than the Pimentiers, but will be every bit as fine once it is ready to drink. 2032-2075+. **92.**



Guillaume Camus in the courtyard of his domaine in Savigny-lès-Beaune.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Monsieur Camus included thirty percent whole clusters in his les Lavières in 2020. The wine has turned out stunningly well in this vintage, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a refined blend of cherries, red plums, a very complex base of soil tones, Savigny spices, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully deep and sappy at the core, with excellent mineral drive and grip, suave, fine-grained tannins and excellent backend lift on the long, complex and focused finish. Great juice. 2034-2090. **94.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Gravains”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume noted that he used just a touch more new oak this year for the Gravains than he did for the Lavières, simply due to the number of casks he had of each wine. The soils here are more chalky and white clay than the volcanic soils of Lavières, with plenty of gravel in the Camus-Bruchon parcels, so the wine is always a touch more reserved out of the blocks than the Lavières. The 2020 shows excellent potential, with the bouquet delivering scents of red and black cherries, plummy fruit tones, a touch of pomegranate, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, cloves and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with fine soil inflection, tangy acids, ripe tannins and a long, complex and very, very promising finish. Fine, fine Savigny in the making. 2035-2090. **94.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Narbantons”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Narbantons faces northwest and has plenty of clay in the soil, so this is always the most structured Savigny premier cru *chez* Camus each year. In 2020, this is augmented by the beautiful precision and purity of fruit that Guillaume has found for each wine in the cellars, as the Narbantons offers up a constellation of red and black cherries, pomegranate, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, Savigny spice tones, dark soil elements and a nice framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with excellent transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very long, youthful and vibrant finish. Great juice. 2035-2090. **94.**

2020 Beaune “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume noted that his vines in Clos du Roi suffered far more from the hydric stress of the vintage of 2020 than any of his parcels in Savigny. The wine has ended up quite well despite these depravations, with plenty of depth, complexity and sappiness, but one can sense that the tannins were not quite as physiologically ripe as was the case for the Savignys this year. The bouquet is very attractive on the Clos du Roi, delivering scents of black cherries, red plums, a touch of chocolate, mustard seed, dark soil tones, just a hint of violet and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy on the backend, with a fine core of sappy fruit, good soil undertow and a long, complex and nicely focused finish. The tannins are not coarse here by any means, but they are simply not quite as beautifully polished as those found in the Savigny premier crus in 2020. Still, this is a lovely and very tasty bottle in the making. 2032-2080. **92.**

2020 Pommard “Clos des Arvelets”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The yields were quite short in the Camus family’s parcel of Clos des Arvelets this year, so the wine ended up being raised in forty-five percent new oak as a result. However, the short crop had no deleterious effects on the wine itself, which is truly beautiful this year. The aromatic constellation is a lovely blend of cherries, pomegranate, a touch of red plum, *pigeon*, a beautiful base of soil, roses, vanillin oak and a dollop of sweet stem tones in the upper register from the whole clusters. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a sappy core, excellent soil signature and grip, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long, complex and vibrant finish. A beautiful bottle of Pommard in the making! 2035-2100. **94.**

Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Claude and François de Nicolay have made some of the finest 2020s that I tasted on my entire trip. These are svelte, lower octane and beautifully soil-driven examples of the vintage and they very much epitomize just how good this vintage could be, if all the correct decisions were taken leading into the harvest. The domaine began picking on August 17th in 2020, but only picked in the mornings, before the sun really got hot in the afternoons, so it took them until the 30th of the month to finish collecting everything out in the vines. Yields here were short for both reds and whites, with the former averaging twenty-eight hectoliters per hectare in 2020 and the latter a bit better, but hardly generous, at thirty-five hectoliters per hectare. But, as everything was picked on the early side, alcohols here range from thirteen percent to just under fourteen percent in this vintage, which is quite moderate compared to some cellars with quite heady alcohol levels in 2020. All of the red wines from Chandon de Briailles are one hundred percent whole clusters in this vintage. I did not taste the full range of 2020 reds during my visit, as a couple had already been assembled into tank for bottling in the new year and were not yet recovered from the racking. But, the ones I did taste were truly exceptional in quality and clearly demonstrate that 2020 will be one of the great recent vintages at this consistently fine domaine.

For the white wine cuvées from the domaine, Claude de Nicolay noted that “the alcoholic fermentations were all very slow for the whites this year, only finishing up in May of 2021, and the malos have now been completed also, but were equally slow due to the cold summer.” Both the Île de Vergelesses Blancs and the Corton Blanc were still in cask on their fine lees at the time of my visit, which was quite exceptional, as usually these wines will have already been assembled in tank for a few months by the end of November. I scored them within a range this year, as they were clearly still quite adolescent, but I have little doubt that they will end up as stunning as the reds in due course and eventually place at the top of each range.

Vins Blancs

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “Île de Vergelesses” Blanc - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2020 Île de Vergelesses Blanc was picked on August 23rd in this vintage seems to have all of its constituent components in place for eventual high quality, but it was still quite youthful at the time of my visit. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful mix of apple, a touch of sweet quince, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, citrus peel and still a touch of leesy notes from the cask. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full, with fine length and zesty acids. I am sure this is going to be excellent, but it is most emphatically not ready for primetime. 2025-2050. **91-93.**

2020 Corton Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Similarly, the 2020 Corton Blanc from the de Nicolay family is a fine young wine in the making, but at the time of my visit, one must emphasize just how unevolved and adolescent the wine was showing out of cask. The nose offers up scents of apple, pear, lemon, chalky soil tones, a hint of beeswax and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, deep and shows excellent backend lift, with zesty acids, fine soil undertow and excellent promise. 2026-2050. **92-94+.**

Vins Rouges

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Fourneaux”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The les Fourneaux at Chandon de Briailles is bottled as a village wine (which I never knew before), as one third of the parcel falls over the line into the AC sector of the vineyard. However, as the *villages* section of the domaine’s vines are all old, having been planted in 1956, they are blended with the other two-thirds in the premier cru section to make this lovely bottling. The 2020 Fourneaux offers up a very stylish nose of dark berries, cassis, a hint of Savigny fruitcake, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a touch of currant leaf in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven out of the blocks, with a fine core of black fruit, ripe, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2027-2060+. **91+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2020 les Lavières was raised in ten percent new oak in this vintage. It is another beautifully refined young wine, with its aromatic constellation offering up scents of black cherries, sweet cassis, violets, bonfire, a gorgeous base of soil tones, gamebird, currant leaf and a lovely array of upper register spice tones from both its Savigny origins and its whole clusters. On the palate the wine is svelte, full and very pure, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, poised and complex finish. A lovely wine in the making. 2030-2080. **93.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “Île de Vergelesses” - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2020 Île de Vergelesses from the de Nicolays is an outstanding wine in the making, sharing the estate’s signature sense of elegance and transparency in this vintage. The lovely, black fruity notes wafts from the glass in a refined blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, grilled venison, licorice, a bit of sweet stem tones, woodsmoke and just a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and defined by its purity and elegant profile, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent transparency, ripe, buried tannins, tangy, well-integrated acids and a very, very long, complex and classy finish. One-third of the three hectares the domaine has in this vineyard are fully sixty years of age and seemingly helped resist the hydric stress of the weeks of high summer, so the wine has ended up with a very classic sense of balance. All this superb wine needs is time in the cellar to fully blossom. 2030-2080+. **93+**.



Claude de Nicolay (and her brother François) have crafted an absolutely stellar range of 2020s.

2020 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The de Nicolay family has four parcels in the Bressandes vineyard, with two on chalkier soils in Aloxe and two on deeper soils in Ladoix, and the mix of the two types of soil seems to have held them in good stead during the heat of midsummer of 2020. Claude de Nicolay commented that this year, they racked one-third of this cuvée in four year-old, Stockinger *foudres* to complete its *elevage*, and have blended this with the other two-thirds, that have been

raised in traditionally-sized Burgundy barrels, she is very content with how the wine is evolving and we may see more Stockinger *foudres* used here in coming years. The 2020 Bressandes is an outstanding young wine, delivering an aromatic constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a nice touch of red currant, a superb base of minerality, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, sweet stem tones and an exotic touch of fresh mint in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, vibrant and beautifully balanced, with a superb core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and impressive mineral drive on the long and complex finish. This is going to be a great bottle of Corton. 2037-2100. **95.**

2020 Corton “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2020 Clos du Roi from Chandon de Briailles is another stellar bottle in the making. The bouquet is showing a beautiful array of spices today, no doubt partially from its whole clusters, as it delivers scents of cloves, fresh thyme, coriander seed to augment black fruity notes of black cherries, cassis, coffee bean, bonfire, a touch of cedar and a simply gorgeous base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core, great mineral undertow, fine-grained tannins and a very long, tangy and impeccably balanced finish. Great juice. 2038-2100. **96.**

Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Hugues Pavelot has made a lovely selection of riper 2020s, with the reds big, sappy and, in most cases, nicely tethered to their underlying terroir. But for him, the biggest surprise was the quality of the white wines from this vintage, as he did not have quite as high expectations for the whites as the reds leading into harvest. As 2020 was a very warm, dry vintage, Monsieur Pavelot expected the reds to come out very well indeed, particularly when looking at the bunches coming into the cuverie at the end of August, but for the whites, he noted “with such a warm summer and with those heat spikes, I was expecting the whites to be a bit more heavy in personality.” However, he was quite surprised with how nicely they evolved in barrel and they ended up getting a bit of extra time on their fine lees, through no plan of Monsieur Pavelot! He noted that “there was always so much work to do in the vineyards in the summer of 2021, with all of the rain and pressure from mildew and other maladies, that I did not get the chance to assemble the whites from 2020 for bottling for many weeks longer than I initially planned.” He continued, “I would taste them at the start of the week, and think, this tastes really good and there is certainly no rush to get it ready for bottling- and there seemed to always be more pressing things to do out in the vines this past summer!” So, he would leave the wines for a week or two, planning, once the battle out in the vines had relented, to get rolling with preparation for bottling of the 2020 whites. But, another crisis would emerge with the cold and frequent rain of the summer of 2021, so he would taste his 2020 whites again and think “no rush, they are evolving nicely and quite slowly” and head back out to the vines. In the end, he feels that this extended elevage greatly benefited the evolution of his 2020 white wines, which have indeed turned out exceptionally well this year! As for the 2020 reds, they have generally all landed between 13.5 and fourteen percent octane, with the later-picked parcels such as the Bourgogne rouge being on the higher side of the range. Picking started here on August 21st in 2020. A few of the wines are a bit riper in personality than I would ideally like to see, but they are not overripe, and I am sure that they will be crowd pleasers for many, though I personally might be more attracted to one of the leaner-styled vintages here in recent times.

Vins Rouges

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

As is true at so many domaines in 2020, the Bourgogne rouge is Hugues Pavelot's highest octane wine in this vintage, coming in at fourteen percent. Nevertheless, the wine is bright and sappy, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of currant leaf in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite broad-shouldered for Bourgogne, with a good core, moderate tannins and lovely length and grip on the quite well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2025-2040. **89.**

2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts” from Domaine Pavelot is one of their wines made from purchased grapes and this is a bit riper in personality than the Bourgogne this year, with a bit of *sur maturité* in evidence on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of black raspberries, cassis, balsamic overtones, coffee grounds and dark soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush at the core, with slightly grainy tannins, tangy acids and good length and grip on the finish. This is on the cusp of being a bit overripe for my tastes, but it is not stridently prune. 2026-2040+. **88.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune is from the domaine's own vines and the precision and purity jump right back up with this wine, after the short detour with the Chorey. The nose wafts from the glass in a very attractive blend of cassis, blackberries, espresso, woodsmoke, gamebird, dark soil tones and again, a nice topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and very nicely balanced, with a sappy core, good focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic and quite promising finish. 2028-2060. **90+.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “Belle Fille”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

There is a new *villages* level Pernand-Vergelesses in the roster of bottlings *chez* Pavelot, made from purchased fruit. These vines are very nicely situated, right next to the restaurant of Le Charlemagne for those who have made the drive out to Pernand. This inaugural vintage is excellent, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of black plums, cassis, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil tones, currant leaf and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and elegant in profile, with lovely mid-palate depth, good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and impressive focus and grip on the long, complex and nicely balanced finish. A fine new addition to the Pavelot lineup! 2027-2060+. **90+.**

2020 Volnay- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Volnay *villages* bottling from Hugues Pavelot (which is also made from purchased fruit) has really turned out very nicely in this vintage and shares some of the same sense of elegance as the new Pernand bottling. The nose wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of cassis, black plums, bitter chocolate, gamebird, coffee bean, a fine base of soil tones and just a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, plush and full, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, 1990-like finish that closes with just a hint of *sur maturité*. Good juice. 2030-2065+. **90.**

2020 Aloxe-Corton- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The fine Aloxe *villages* bottling *chez* Pavelot is right on the money in 2020, offering up a refined nose of black cherries, cassis, grilled *pigeon*, bitter chocolate, a touch of sweet stem tones, dark soil, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and very nicely balanced, with fine depth at the core, bright acids and a long, ripely tannic and seamless finish. Another fine bottle of AC in the making. 2030-2065+. **90.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Peuillots” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 les Peuillots is a bit riper in personality than the lovely Aloxe bottling, offering up scents of black raspberries, sweet cassis, coffee grounds, grilled venison, a good base of soil, vanillin oak and a, gentle, exotic topnote of eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is plush, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, good focus and grip and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This is a broad-shouldered example of Savigny, but it is nicely balanced and will age quite gracefully. 2033-2080. **91+**.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Serpentières” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 les Serpentières from Hugues Pavelot is a lovely bottle in the making, and shows even a touch more of that exotic eucalyptus note in the upper register than in the les Peuillots. The nicely ripe bouquet wafts from the glass in a vibrant blend of sweet cassis, a hint of framboise, dark soil tones, gamebird, chocolate, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and the aforementioned eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with a good base of soil, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and fine length and grip on the complex and succulent finish. Good juice. 2033-2085. **92**.

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 les Vergelesses, which is made from purchased grapes, is another good bottle of ripe, generous pinot noir. The deep and sappy nose offers up scents of black raspberries, cassis, menthol, a touch of *garrigue*, venison, a good base of soil, coffee grounds and cedar. On the palate the wine is plush, full-bodied and quite ripe in personality, with a fine core of fruit, chewy, well-integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. Again, this reminds me quite a bit of a young 1990 red Burgundy in size and shape. 2032-2075+. **91**.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 les Lavières from Monsieur Pavelot is another broad-shouldered example of the vintage, with just a hint of backend *sur maturité* intruding on the finish. The bouquet is deep and black fruity, delivering a mix of black cherries, cassis, *pigeon*, dark chocolate, a fine base of soil tones and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is plush on the attack, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with buried, seamless tannins, good focus and grip and just a hint of too much ripeness showing on the long finish. 2030-2075+. **90**.

2020 Beaune “Bressandes” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The Domaine Pavelot 2020 Beaune “Bressandes” is cut from the same ripe and buxom cloth as the les Lavières this year. The wine is deep, full and quite complex on the palate, with sappy core, ripe tannins, good acids and impressive length and grip. But, the nose shows just a bit of overripeness in its constellation of black cherries, dark berries, balsamic overtones, coffee grounds, venison and a touch of new wood. This has the balance to age gracefully, but it seems likely to always be just a touch riper in personality than I would ideally like and once again, seems most likely to evolve along the lines of a 1990 (a vintage others like decidedly more than I do these days). 2030-2075+. **90**.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Guettes from Hugues Pavelot is a fine bottle in the making, as the wine avoids those hints of *sur maturité* that can be found in the Bressandes and les Lavières. The bouquet is ripe, but pure and precise at the same time, offering up notes of cassis, dark berries, bitter chocolate, a beautiful base of soil tones, *pigeon*, vanillin oak and a touch of menthol in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a sappy core of black fruit, lovely soil undertow, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. This is going to be lovely. 2033-2080+. **92+**.

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Gravains”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 aux Gravains seems to straddle the stylistic lines between the Lavières and the Guettes this year, as the wine is a tad riper than the Guettes, but not as much as the Lavières. The bouquet is sappy and quite extroverted, jumping from the glass in a blend of black raspberries, sweet cassis, dark soil tones, just a hint of balsamic shadings, spit-roasted game, woodsmoke, cedar and a dollop of eucalyptus in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured in personality, with a sappy core of black fruit, good soil signature, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, youthful and nicely balanced finish. 2033-2080. **92.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “la Dominode”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 la Dominode from Monsieur Pavelot is an excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and precise, offering up notes of cassis, dark berries, coffee bean, bonfire, a complex base of dark soil tones, a touch of currant leaf and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full, focused and shows off excellent depth in the mid-palate, with ripe, seamless tannins, fine balance and grip and a long, sappy and complex finish. This is lovely. 2033-2085. **93.**

Vins Blancs**2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune “Clos Margot” Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot**

The Domaine Pavelot 2020 Chorey-lès-Beaune Blanc is a bright and pretty example of the vintage. The wine offers up a succulent nose of quince, crab apple, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely juicy on the attack, with a good core, tangy acids and a long, bouncy finish. Good juice for early drinking. 2022-2030+. **89.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc from Hugues Pavelot is an outstanding wine and reminds me quite a bit of the lovely 2002 version that I happily drank a case of over many years. The nose is pure and precise, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, white flowers redolent of both fruit blossoms and honeysuckle and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and zesty, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the poised and well-balanced finish. A superb value. 2024-2040+. **91.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2020 Pernand Blanc from Domaine Pavelot is also a lovely wine, but it does not quite possess the same backend precision as is found in the Savigny Blanc this year. However, the bouquet is lovely, offering up scents of apple, pear, almond, chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, good balance and acidity and a long, vibrant and succulent finish. If this develops the same sense of focus as is already found in the Savigny Blanc with a bit of bottle age, then it will be every bit as fine. 2024-2040+. **90+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Peuillots” Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The Savigny “les Peuillots” Blanc is a new wine in the cellars at Domaine Pavelot, but this is also the last vintage, as the proprietor has decided after this vintage that he no longer wishes to sell the grapes! Too bad, as this is really a beautiful bottle of white Burgundy. The bright and complex nose jumps from the glass in a lovely blend of pear, sweet quince, a touch of orange zest, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, fresh almond, a dollop of vanillin oak and a beautiful, floral topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full and vibrant, with a

lovely core of fruit, a beautiful girdle of acidity, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and nicely reserved finish. A truly lovely bottle. 2024-2050. **92+**.

2020 Corton Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Hugues Pavelot's 2020 Corton Blanc is truly a stunning young wine this year. The beautifully expressive bouquet offers up a constellation of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, *crème patissière*, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a great core of fruit, superb mineral drive and bounce, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the long, complex and vibrant finish. Great juice. 2026-2060. **95**.



Beaune

Maison Joseph Drouhin

In recent years, Maison Joseph Drouhin has organized a couple of big tastings for journalists, merchants and visiting clients in November to show the new vintage. With Covid still percolating along this year, they did not do these big tastings in November, though Véronique Drouhin commented that they hope to do at least one in February in London, and perhaps a similar event in the United States around that time. I imagine that how this current uptick in cases across the globe, with the new variant, eventually unfolds will have a lot to do with whether or not those more comprehensive tastings are held. Happily, the maison put together a nice range of samples of their 2020s for me to taste at the start of my trip here, with the selection

predicated upon both my desire to taste some of the “smaller” appellations, which get better and better each year from the Drouhin family (and are far more available these days in the market) and what was sufficiently past its malolactic fermentation to be ready to show. For, this is one of the domaines I visited where the malos were quite slow for the 2020 vintage, and there were a few wines still down in the cellars that were seemingly had only just completed their malolactic fermentations a short time before my visit. Consequently, some of the usual suspects that I have the opportunity to taste each year were not in the range of samples of 2020s, but it was certainly a fine, representative range to highlight the vintage. The red wines of 2020 chez Drouhin are quite uniformly black fruity in personality, as are so many reds from the vintage, and these were some of the wines that were still quite adolescent in personality, with lovely fruit tones, but the soil signature currently running late and not yet fully arrived in the profile of the wines. I have little doubt that they will take center stage in the reds here in good time, but they were rather shy in this regard at the very end of November. The white wines, as is typical in this vintage, were absolutely singing at the time of my visit.

I should also take a moment to congratulate Véronique Boss-Drouhin for her very recent ceremony celebrating her award of the Legion of Honor in France. This is a huge award and a rare honor to be bestowed on the most deserving and accomplished citizens of France over the more than two hundred years since its creation in 1802. Véronique was originally bestowed the decoration of the Legion of Honor in July of 2019, at the height of the pandemic, so the Drouhin family properly decided to hold off on any ceremony until the end of this year, which was held in the main hall of the beautiful Hospices de Beaune. One hundred and seventy people were in attendance to commemorate the historical moment and salute Véronique’s myriad of accomplishments over the course of her career, including her tireless promotion of the wines of Burgundy from Maison Joseph Drouhin, as well as her founding and continued direction of the family’s two superb wineries in Oregon, Roserock and Domaine Drouhin Oregon. Just a few of past recipients include Hector Berlioz, Georges Braque, Mary Cassatt, Edouard Manet, Auguste Rodin, Alexis de Tocqueville, Jacques Cousteau, Gustave Flaubert, Paul Bocuse, Irène Joliot-Curie and Jean-Paul Sartre, amongst many others. It is wonderful to see Véronique’s very significant accomplishments recognized and celebrated with this award.

Vins Blancs de Maison Drouhin

2020 Mâcon-Lugny “les Charmes”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin’s 2020 Mâcon-Lugny “les Charmes” was already bottled prior to the harvest of 2021, so it was showing very nicely at the time of my visit. The bottling is fermented and raised entirely in stainless steel tank. The bouquet is bright and quite stylish this year, offering up scents of ripe pear, fresh pineapple, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nicely ripe and succulent, with good acids and grip, fine focus and a long, vibrant and bouncy finish. Good juice. 2022-2028. **89.**

2020 Pouilly-Vinzelles- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Pouilly-Vinzelles was raised in a combination of both five hundred liter casks and stainless steel this year, with one-third of the blend barrel-fermented and raised in the larger barrels. It is an excellent wine in this vintage, with an aromatic constellation of pear, apple, a fine base of limestone soil tones, a touch of hazelnut, lemon blossoms and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a plump core, excellent

acidity and focus and very impressive backend lift on the long and seamlessly balanced finish. This is fine, fine juice. 2022-2032. **91+**.

2020 Côte de Beaune Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I have been a big fan of the Côte de Beaune Blanc bottling from Maison Drouhin for many years and was very happy to learn that this wine is finally available in the American market, where it had not been shipped until very recently. I always think of this as a “baby Clos des Mouches”, as it shares some similarities in both aromatics and flavors with that great wine. The 2020 was most barrel-fermented this year, but only saw a small percentage of new oak. It delivers a fine nose of apple, nectarine, spring flowers, a fine base of chalky soil tones, fresh almond and a delicate framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a lovely core of perfectly ripe fruit, with bright, zesty acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, classic finish. Fine juice. 2022-2035. **90+**.

2020 Meursault- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The *villages* level bottlings of both white and red wines at Maison Drouhin have been getting better and better with each passing vintage, and the 2020 Meursault is no exception. This is a lovely wine, offering up a ripe and very refined bouquet of apple, tangerine, hazelnuts, fruit blossoms, a fine base of chalky soil and a nice base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, complex and succulent at the core, with a lovely girdle of acidity, impeccable balance and a long, vibrant and quite classic finish. Fine juice. 2022-2040+. **91**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Chassagne AC is also very strong from the Drouhin family in this vintage. The bouquet is quite refined out of the blocks, delivering scents of pear, lemon, a stony base of soil tones, white lilies, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite mineral-driven in personality, with a fine core of fruit, bright acids and superb *typicité* on the long, zesty finish. Another lovely bottle. 2022-2040+. **91**.

2020 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

Véronique Drouhin noted that the family tried something different with their 2020 Les Clos, as half of this wine was barrel-fermented in old casks and the other half in cement egg this year. The resulting wine is fascinating, as the portion fermented and raised in egg has given the blend a different textural character that I find very attractive. The bouquet is still classic Les Clos, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, oyster shell, limestone minerality, beeswax and a floral topnote redolent of honeysuckle. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a classic girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip and an extremely long, snappy and youthful finish. It almost seems as there is a more tactile sensation to the backend minerality here from the partial *elevage* in cement eggs. A superb wine. 2026-2055. **95**.

2020 Meursault “Charmes”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Meursault “Charmes” from Maison Joseph Drouhin is another absolutely superb bottle in the making. The bouquet is bright, precise and utterly classical in profile, delivering a mix of apple, pear, a touch of passion fruit, salty, chalky soil tones, almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and racy, with fine mid-palate depth, lovely focus and grip and most impressive backend energy on the long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. 2022-2050. **93+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Embazées”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The les Embazées bottling is a relatively new premier cru from Maison Drouhin, so I fully understood their desire to show it in the lineup of 2020s, though I did lament for not having the opportunity to taste their Marquis de Laguiche bottling of Morgeot (which is one of my very

favorite white wine bottlings in all of Burgundy) this year, as it seemingly had to give up its place to the les Embazées. In any case, this is a lovely wine, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, orange zest, a fine base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a nice touch of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and complex, with an excellent core, fine soil inflection, bright acids and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. 2024-2050. **93.**

2020 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Every time I drink Clos des Mouches Blanc, I think of Sean Connery, as this was his absolutely favorite wine in the world. He would have loved the stunning 2020 version. The nose wafts from the glass in a refined mix of fresh lemon, pear, a touch of beeswax, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms, vanillin oak and that signature Clos des Mouches note of gentle savory elements as a topnote. On the palate the wine is vibrant, ripe and full-bodied, with an excellent girdle of acidity, admirable depth and grip, fine mineral drive and a long, poised and very, very classy finish. Lovely juice. 2026-2055+. **94.**

2020 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Joseph Drouhin (Estate)

The 2020 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Drouhin is another stellar example of the vintage. The bouquet is very precise and expressive, delivering notes of apple, pear, flinty, chalky minerality, lemon blossoms, white lilies, citrus zest and a lovely foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, racy and rock solid at the core, with a full-bodied and graceful format, beautiful mineral undertow, snappy acids and a long, complex and utterly seamless finish that shows tremendous lift and grip. Great juice. 2028-2065. **96.**

Vins Rouges de Maison Drouhin

2020 Santenay “Beaurepaire”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

This is a lovely *villages* level bottling of Santenay, which clearly seems to be one of the current “winners” in the tragedy of global warming, as the commune’s wines currently seem to really be benefiting from warmer growing seasons. And there is really excellent *terroir* in Santenay that is now getting to shine with the riper fruit tones of climate change. The 2020 Beaurepaire bottling from the Drouhins delivers a very bright, black fruity bouquet of dark berries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, fresh herbs and a nice base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and juicy at the core, with well-integrated tannins, fine focus and grip and a nice touch of whole clusters currently perking up the finish. Good juice in the making. 2028-2055. **89.**

2020 Volnay- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Volnay *villages* from the Drouhins is a fine example of the vintage. The bouquet is bright, ripe and classy, offering up scents of cassis, black raspberries, a beautiful base of dark soil tones, a touch of balsam bough, juniper berries and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is complex, elegant and beautifully transparent in personality, with a full-bodied format, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long, complex and tangy finish. A fine, fine AC in the making. 2030-2075. **90+.**

2020 Vosne-Romanée- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Vosne-Romanée from Maison Joseph Drouhin was showing even better potential at the time of my visit at the end of November. The nose is black fruity in the style of the vintage, delivering scents of black plums, black raspberries, espresso, dark soil, woodsmoke, pigeon, a touch of bay leaf, juniper berry and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied,

complex and shows off lovely sappiness at the core, with bright acids, fine focus and grip, ripe, suave tannins and a long, energetic and complex finish. Lovely juice. 2030-2065+. **91.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Gevrey *villages* is another fine AC from the Drouhin family. The nose is nicely precise and vibrant, jumping from the glass in a mix of cassis, black cherries, mustard seed, coffee bean, a nice touch of sweet stem tones, dark soil elements and a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and precise, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins and excellent balance and grip on the long, complex finish. This bottling includes twenty-five to thirty percent premier cru in it this year! 2030-2065+. **91.**



Véronique Drouhin-Boss in the comfortable tasting room at the maison.

2020 Chambolle-Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

In the predominant style of the vintage this year, the 2020 Chambolle AC from Maison Drouhin is quite black fruity in personality, and to my mind, recalls the 1993 version of this bottling. The bouquet delivers a mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, balsam bough, a lovely base of soil, gamebird and a gentle touch of cedary oak. Full-bodied, focused and sappy on the palate, the wine shows off fine balance and focus, ripe, buried tannins and a long, bouncy and youthfully complex finish. Good juice. 2028-2065. **91.**

2020 Beaune “Grèves”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family’s 2020 Beaune “Grèves” is a superb bottling in the making. It is full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with plenty of black fruit, impressive soil signature, ripe tannins and a nice touch of limestone minerality lifting up the long finish. The bouquet is very classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, an emerging base of soil tones, a touch of stems and a deft foundation of new oak. This will need more than a decade to start to stir, but it has a long and rewarding future ahead of it. 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Clos des Mouches *rouges* is every bit as fine as the Grèves this year. Again, stylistic comparisons to the young 1993 are not all that far-fetched for this wine, despite the ’93 vintage being a cool one and 2020 to being a solar year. The nose delivers a lovely constellation of sweet dark berries, black plum, bitter chocolate, grilled venison, dark soil tones, a touch of stems and a nice framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, ripe and tangy, with a rock solid core, fine soil signature hovering on the horizon, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and still quite youthful finish. 2033-2085. **93.**

2020 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The premier cru bottling of Clos Prieur is another relatively new cuvée at Maison Drouhin and it is quickly becoming one of my favorites. The 2020 is very promising, with its bouquet drifting from the glass in a blend of black cherries, sweet cassis, grilled meats, espresso, balsam bough, a complex base of dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and admirably precise, with impressive depth of fruit at the core, good mineral drive, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and well-balanced finish. 2033-2085. **93+.**

2020 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin’s les Amoureuses is always one of the finest bottlings to be found in the Côte d’Or, and the 2020 version is going to be another cellar treasure in due course. The bouquet is deep and stunning, with a touch of red fruity elements creeping into its bouquet of red and black cherries, gamebird, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird, balsam bough and a refined foundation of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and very refined in profile, with a sappy core, lovely soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and balance on the long, pure and vibrant finish. All this beauty needs is plenty of bottle age. 2035-2095. **97.**

2020 Charmes-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Thirty-five years ago, it was the 1985 vintage of Maison Drouhin’s Charmes-Chambertin that got this young wine merchant to take note of just how good the Drouhin family’s top red Burgundies were, as I was still under the mistaken impression in those early days that small growers made superior wines to *négociants*. Over the years, the *maison* lost its former source from fruit from Charmes, but eventually found one equally fine and this has again been one of their top grand crus now for many years. The 2020 Charmes offers up a beautiful bouquet of cassis, black cherries, smoked meats, dark soil tones, espresso, a nice touch of stem spice and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and fairly powerful in personality for this bottling, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, tannins, precise focus and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This is going to be excellent, but it will demand a bit of patience. 2035-2100. **94+.**

2020 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2020 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze” from Maison Joseph Drouhin is another stellar example of the vintage. The superb nose offers up scents of cassis, black raspberries, mustard

seed, a complex base of black minerality, grilled meats, coffee bean, woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and beautifully soil-driven in personality, with a superb core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and balance on the very long, complex finish. Superb juice. 2037-2100. **96.**



Pommard

Château de Pommard

2020 will be the last vintage here for Cellar Master Emmanuel Sala, who arrived at Château de Pommard in 2007 and really oversaw an impressive revitalization of this fine property in the Côte de Beaune. Monsieur Sala's tenure has seen two or three different owners, and the one constant at this lovely property has been the continued excellence of the wines fabricated by Emmanuel during his stay overseeing the cellars here. He will certainly leave quite a legacy of stellar wines behind him and his 2020 is another excellent bottle in the making. I know that Pommard in general is not particularly fashionable in many Burgundy collectors' circles these days, but the wines of Château de Pommard are exceptional, high quality and structured reds that beautifully repay long-term cellaring. Of course, I have the benefit of having drunk many bottles of the estate's 1978 and 1985 vintages when they were fully mature, so I know firsthand how beautifully this wine evolves with bottle age, taking on personality traits that remind me very strongly of Pommard "Epenots" when they are fully mature. And, as fine as the '78 and '85 vintages were here at the estate, there is little doubt that every single vintage from 2007 forwards, under the steady winemaking hand of Monsieur Sala, are a step up in quality from those lovely wines. So, Château de Pommard remains an excellent source for long-lived, complex and classic Côte de Beaune reds from their own estate vineyards, and I was able to taste a handful of 2019 négociant bottlings of white wines from the estate as well on this visit that were absolutely superb (and will appear in next issue's feature on the 2019 vintage in Burgundy). As there is a brand new cuverie being constructed here at the present time, one has to imagine that the potential of these wines will only go higher, if the owners can find a new Cellar Master as talented as Emmanuel Sala for future vintages. Getting back to the 2020s here, Monsieur Sala and his picking team were out in the vines on August 27th of that year, bringing in

the bunches with alacrity, and the estate's own red wines will be raised in twenty percent new oak in 2020.

2020 Pommard “Clos Marey-Monge” Monopole- Château de Pommard

Though the beautiful walled-in vineyard of Château de Pommard is only officially entitled to *villages* wine status, to my palate, this has always been at least premier cru quality level and, when the estate is at the top of its game, one of the top wines produced in the commune. The 2020 vintage is going to be a superb one for this wine, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of black plums, dark berries, coffee bean, a complex base of soil tones, a touch of grilled meats, woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with lovely core of black fruit, fine soil signature and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and a long, tangy and very well-balanced finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2035-2090. **93.**

Volnay

Domaine Michel Lafarge

Vins Blancs de Domaine Lafarge

As was the case in 2018, during another blazing summer, the Lafarge family's vineyard parcels seem to have weathered the heat and drought of 2020 growing season better than the vines of many of their neighbors, which Frédéric Lafarge attributes to their farming biodynamically. To his mind, and I see absolutely no reason to dispute any of his observations, the biodynamic farming better prepares plants to adapt to the vagaries of each growing season. Whatever the reason (and you can place me squarely in the biodynamics camp), the range of 2020s chez Lafarge are absolutely stunning young wines, with classical levels of alcohol, stunning purity of both red and black fruit, great typicité to their underlying terroirs, seamless, perfectly measured structural undercarriages, well-integrated acids and so much early complexity that one almost thinks they hail from a different vintage than 2020! 1978 immediately comes to mind on this count. The family and their picking team were out in the vines on August 22nd of 2020, bringing in the chardonnay first, followed by the pinot noir and then taking a break before finishing up with their old vine parcels of Aligoté, which were picked the third week of September this year! Monsieur Lafarge aged all of his 2020 premier crus in about fifteen percent new oak, so for those who love red and white Burgundies that are terroir-centric and only allow the new oak to play a minor supporting role, these 2020s will be right up your alley! The red wines chez Lafarge are deep, pure and ripely tannic and consequently, will take some time to unfurl and will prove to be very long-lived in the cellar. The 2020 whites are pure, zesty and mineral-driven and truly lovely. Frédéric Lafarge feels that 2020 is probably the finest vintage here since the magical 1999s! This is unmistakably one of the finest collections of 2020s that one will find anywhere in Burgundy this year.

2020 Bourgogne Aligoté “Raisin d’Orée”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Bourgogne Aligoté “Raisin d’Orée” from the Lafarge family is a lovely wine this year, showing excellent purity in its bouquet of crabapple, quince, orange peel and west tone minerality. On the palate the wine is bright, full and bouncy, with a lovely core, excellent mineral drive and cut, zesty acids and a long, well-balanced finish. A lovely Aligoté. 2024-2040. **89.**

2020 Meursault- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Meursault *villages* from Domaine Lafarge is also a lovely bottle in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a vibrant blend of apple, pear, almond, chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and pure, with a lovely core of fruit, snappy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. This will be a fine bottle with just a bit of bottle age. 2025-2045+. **90+**.

2020 Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

I learned for the first time on this visit that the chardonnay vines for the Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées” bottling lie in the vineyard of Santenots du Milieu in Volnay, which can be sold as Meursault “Santenots” when it is planted to chardonnay. I love this bottling, but ever since I left the domaine, I have been fantasizing about a Volnay “Santenots du Milieu” cuvée from the Lafarges! I know that they are hardly short on great Volnay premier crus in their lineup already, but one still has to admit that a Santenots du Milieu bottling from Domaine Lafarge would be very exciting! In any case, the 2020 Vendanges Selectionées Meursault is excellent this year, delivering a complex nose of apple, pear, hazelnuts, white lilies, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with crisp acids, impeccable balance and grip, a lovely core and a long, complex and soil-driven finish. A lovely, lovely wine. 2026-2055. **92**.

2020 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots” Blanc- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Clos des Aigrots Blanc is exceptional from the Lafarge family this year. The bouquet is deep, pure and vibrant, wafting from the glass in a blaze of white peach, pear, a touch of beeswax, fruit blossoms and simply beautiful base of chalky soil tones and an elegant framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, bright and nicely reserved in personality out of the blocks, with an excellent core of fruit, superb soil signature, bouncy acids and a very long, precise and classic finish. Fine, fine juice. 2027-2055+. **93+**.

Vins Rouges de Domaine Lafarge

2020 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Exception”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Most of the vines used for the Cuvée Exception bottling *chez* Lafarge are now ninety-two years of age. In this vintage, the family had decided to isolate one plot of the oldest vines and bottle them on their own in magnum, whose note follows below, but the remainder of the bottling still retains plenty of fruit from the ninety-two year-old vines as well. The bouquet here is lovely in 2020, offering up scents of sweet cranberries, cherries, woodsmoke, fresh thyme and a fine base of stony soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish, long and intensely flavored, with tangy acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex finish that closes with just a bit of tannin. 2025-2045+. **89**.

2020 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Exception” Magnum- Domaine Michel Lafarge

This special magnum bottling of only old vine fruit will get its own name, so it will not be called Cuvée Exception, but as the Lafarge family had not yet decided on a name for the this wine, I have listed it as Cuvée Exception Magnum for the time being. It is interesting that this particular plot of very old vines has some black fruity tones on both the nose and palate, as the regular Cuvée Exception is all red fruit. The nose offers up scents of plums, red and black cherries, a bit of gamebird, woodsmoke, fresh herb tones and stony soil. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, long and complex, with a good core, just a bit more tannin than the regular Cuvée Exception and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. It will be fascinating to see how these magnums unfold with extended bottle age. There is not a dramatic difference in

potential quality between the two bottlings right now, as the differences are more of personality, but we shall see if the very, very old vine magnums distance themselves a bit more from the regular bottling with longer-term cellaring. 2027-2055. **90+**.

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Domaine Lafarge always produces a very strong example of Bourgogne rouge and the 2020 will be no exception. The lovely nose wafts from the glass in a nicely detailed blend of red and black cherries, a touch of plum, gamebird, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long, focused finish. This will need a bit of time in the cellar, but that is true of virtually every vintage of this lovely bottling. 2025-2045. **90**.

2020 Volnay- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Volnay *villages* from the Lafarge family is excellent. The refined bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine mix of red plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of dark soil tones and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is svelte, full and very refined in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely complexity and soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and excellent balance and grip on the long, complex and focused finish. Village wines do not get much better than this! 2030-2070+. **91**.

2020 Volnay “Vendanges Selectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Volnay “Vendanges Selectionées” from Domaine Lafarge is stunning this year. The beautiful bouquet soars from the glass in a blaze of plums, sweet dark berries, duck, a gorgeous base of soil tones, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, just a whisper of oak and a lovely topnote of violets. On the palate the is deep, pure and full, with a sappy core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and a very long, complex and utterly seamless finish. Fine juice. 2032-2075+. **92+**.

2020 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Both the Clos des Aigrots Blanc and Rouge have been such fine additions to the Lafarge lineup since they arrived, and the 2020 rouge is destined to be one of the finest vintages yet for this lovely bottling. The bouquet is bright, pure and already marvelously expressive, offering up notes of black cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, raw cocoa and a nice touch of vanillin oak. on the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, suave and sappy at the core, with excellent soil inflection, ripe, buried tannins, good acids and a very long, balanced and complex finish. Great Beaune in the making. 2033-2085. **93+**.

2020 Beaune “Grèves”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Lafarge family’s 2020 Beaune “Grèves” is even better, as these old vines, all planted in 1921, have weathered the storm of hydric stress without seemingly even noticing there was any deprivation! The wine is beautifully red fruity aromatically this year, delivering scents of cherries, strawberries, chalky minerality, a touch of nutskin, cocoa powder, gamebird and a delicate framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and superbly balanced, with a sappy core of red fruit, marvelous mineral undertow, impeccable balance, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, seamless and vibrant finish. 2033-2085. **94**.

2020 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

Part of the Lafarges’ parcel in Pézerolles was grubbed up after this vintage to be replanted, but will lie fallow for a couple of years first, so this already small cuvée is going to be even smaller for the immediate future. The 2020 version is a stellar young wine, with great elegance out of the blocks for a young Pommard exhibited in its nose of cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, a beautiful base of soil, raw cocoa, vinesmoke and a judicious framing of new oak. On

the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with as sappy core, stunning soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. All that is needed is bottle age. 2035-2085+. **94+**.



The winter sun sinking low over the vineyards of Pommard, with the village's lovely church in the background.

2020 Volnay “Mitans”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Volnay “Mitans” from Domaine Lafarge is another beautiful wine in the making. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation that is very precise this year, wafting from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, plums, gamebird, stony minerality, bonfire, a touch of bitter chocolate and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and soil-driven, with a lovely, sappy core, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and very complex finish. Great juice. 2035-2085. **94**.

2020 Volnay “Pitures”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Pitures is probably the only truly “black fruity” wine in the Lafarge cellars this year, but this has as much to do with the signature of this vineyard’s *terroir* as it does with the vintage’s characteristics. The nose is lovely, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black plums, black cherries, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and a bit of new wood. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, ripely tannic and elegant in profile, with plenty of mid-palate sappiness, fine soil inflection, ripe, seamless tannins, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and classy finish. 2035-2085. **94**.

2020 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Caillerets *chez* Lafarge is another outstanding example of the vintage, but this wine is a bit more reserved in personality out of the blocks than some of these other excellent premier crus. It is quite red fruity this year, offering up scents of red plums, cherries, a nice touch of blood orange, gamebird, stony soil tones, raw cocoa and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, tangy and ripely tannic, with a full-bodied format that shows off a lovely core, impressive backend mineral drive and grip and a long, tangy and youthful finish. 2036-2090. **94.**

2020 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Domaine Lafarge 2020 Clos des Chênes is a gorgeous young wine. The bouquet soars from the glass in a sappy blend of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, summer truffles a beautifully complex base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, loads of violets and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy, full-bodied and very, very pure, with marvelous soil signature, a sappy core, lovely focus and grip and a very long, fine-grained, tangy and properly youthful finish. A truly great wine in the making. 2040-2100+. **96.**

2020 Volnay “Clos du Château des Ducs”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2020 Clos du Château des Ducs is every bit as brilliant as the Clos des Chênes *chez* Lafarge. The wine offers up a supremely elegant aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, a hint of hazelnut, spit-roasted *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, precise, deep and full, with great transparency and grip, a beautiful core of sappy fruit, ripe, fine-grained tannins and flawless balance on the very long, focused and nascently complex finish. Stunning juice. 2040-2100+. **96.**

Domaine Joseph Voillot

*I have loved the recent vintages here at Domaine Joseph Voillot and this has become one of my absolute favorite addresses in the commune of Volnay. Etienne Chaix, the current proprietor at the domaine, started picking on August 22nd of 2020, wishing to keep alcohol levels down as much as possible in this solar vintage. However, I did not arrive at the most opportune moment to taste the 2020s here, as the two Meursaults and the Bourgogne Rouge had all just been recently bottled. In addition, the rest of the cellar had been racked into tank for assemblage two weeks ahead of my visit and some of those wines were still just a bit unsettled when I tasted them. However, no sulfur levels had yet been adjusted and the wines could have been quite a bit grumpier when I tried them, so their eventual quality was still pretty evident on most of the wines at the time of my early December visit. It is a quite unique vintage stylistically at Domaine Voillot, as the wines are quite concentrated in style from the hydric stress out in the vines and the attendant intensification of sugars, acids and tannins in the wines from the paucity of juice in the berries. But, that said, most of the wines are not particularly high in alcohol or showing signs of overt *sur maturité*, just rather concentrated examples of their customary personalities. The 2020 Volnay “Caillerets” was the one wine that was really hard to get a read on during my tasting, as it was crankier than any of the others in tank and I did not take a complete note on the wine, as it was really not on form. But, the rest of the red wine range here seemed destined for good things with extended bottle age, as they were quite nicely balanced across the board, albeit with concentrated, sappy fruit tones, firm tannins and plenty of tangy acids that all will demand bottle age to blossom.*

Vins Blancs

2020 Meursault “les Chevalières”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

This was showing quite well for only recently having been bottled. The bouquet is bright and pure, offering up scents of pear, apple, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely round on the attack, with a good core, bright acids and fine length and grip on the zesty and well-balanced finish. 2022-2045. **91+**.

2020 Meursault “les Cras”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 premier cru bottling of les Cras from Etienne Chaix is another fine bottle of Meursault in the making. The nose is bright and a tad more refined than the Chevalières, delivering a constellation of apple, passion fruit, salty soil tones, hazelnut, a touch of geranium blossom and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full, with fine complexity and grip, a good core, lovely mineral drive and a long, racy and well-balanced finish. This is very good and could do with a few years’ worth of bottle age to properly blossom. 2024-2050+. **92+**.

Vins Rouges

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The Domaine Voillot Bourgogne rouge bottling was showing good potential at the time of my visit, and remember that this too had just been recently bottled. The wine offers up a deep and black fruity nose of dark berries, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and fairly structured, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long, tangy and youthful finish. Like so many examples of Bourgogne rouge in this vintage, this will demand a bit of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2024-2040. **88**.

2020 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The remainder of the 2020 lineup at Domaine Voillot was still in tank and was showing even better than the wines which had been recently bottled. The 2020 Volnay old vines is a lovely wine- very bright and black fruity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of dark berries, cassis, espresso, gamebird, dark soil tones and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with a very sappy core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and promising finish. 2028-2060. **89+**.

2020 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes” from Monsieur Chaix is even a bit more structured than the Volnay (no surprise there), but shows the same beautiful depth of black fruit in its aromatic constellation of dark berries, cassis, woodsmoke, venison, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones and a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with ripe, firm tannins, good focus and grip and a long, very youthful and promising finish. This will demand at least a decade to soften up on the palate, but it has fine potential. 2030-2060+. **89+**.

2020 Beaune “aux Coucheries”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Beaune “aux Coucheries” from Domaine Joseph Voillot is a deep and sappy example of the vintage, delivering a bright bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, a bit of balsamic overtones, dark soil, coffee bean and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and potentially quite suave on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, tangy

acids, ripe tannins and a long, promising finish. This is broad shouldered for a Beaune, but also impressively light on its feet and just loaded with sappy fruit. 2031-2075. **91.**

2020 Volnay “Fremiets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Volnay “Fremiets” was really showing beautifully at the time of my visit. The bouquet delivers a refined aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, cassis, bonfire, venison, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, cedar and a lovely topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with lovely sappiness of black fruit at the core, excellent soil undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and concentrated finish. This is going to be excellent, but needs bottle age to blossom. 2033-2085. **92+.**

2020 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Champans from Domaine Voillot seems just a tad riper than the Fremiets this year, as there is a touch of black raspberry that creeps into the black fruity nose of cassis, blackberry, coffee bean, a lovely base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, *pigeon* and a gentle base of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more obviously structured out of the blocks than the Fremiets, with chewy tannins, good focus and grip and a long, tangy and fairly powerful finish. This seems likely to be a bit more a stylistic creature of its vintage than the Fremiets, but it is very early days for both wines and it will be interesting to see how they evolve with the bottle age that both will require before they blossom. 2035-2085. **92+.**

2020 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Caillerets was not on form at the time of my visit and I did not take a full note on the wine, as it was quite grumpy about being tasted. It seemed to show a bit of *sur maturité* on both the nose and palate, but this could well have been simply a reflection of its recent racking having upset the balance of the wine. It was certainly deep, chocolaty, loaded with fruit and plenty structured and chewy. I hope I have a chance to revisit the wine on a future trip to the domaine and get some real sense for how it has done in 2020, as it was not about to reveal any of its true personality during my visit on December 4th!

2020 Pommard “Clos Micault”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

In contrast, the 2020 Clos Micault was showing very nicely and was really quite easy to assess and this will be a lovely wine with some bottle age. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a very black fruity blend of cassis, dark berries, roasted venison, a lovely base of dark soil tones, coffee bean, bonfire and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and broad-shouldered, with a sappy core of fruit, fine balance and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This will be a lovely bottle in due course. 2033-2085+. **92.**

2020 Pommard “Epenots”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Epenots from Etienne Chaix was one of my favorite wines in the cellar this year, as the wine is nicely elegant and svelte in personality, despite showing all of the depth and concentration of the vintage. The nose delivers a fine blend of cassis, black raspberries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, a nice dollop of vanillin oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and well-balanced, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and promising finish. This is going to be very good indeed, but patience will be required. 2035-2090. **93.**

2020 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2020 Pommard “Pézerolles” from Domaine Voillot will be another long-distance runner for long-term cellaring, but it was more hunkered down at the time of my visit and not as

obviously on form as the Epenots. The wine is pure and plenty deep on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of black cherries, cassis, espresso, bonfire, gamebird, a touch of balsamic overtones and just a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy and full, with a very black fruity personality, firm tannins and a long, ripe and youthful finish. This seems right on the border of being too ripe, but it is too early on in its evolution to say that this will end up overtly marked by *sur maturité*, as this may well just always be a big, ripe and sappy wine that never strays over the line into overripeness. Time will tell, but this bottling has such a fine track record from the domaine that I am inclined to stay optimistic of it evolving along the lines of one of the successful 1990 red Burgundies, rather than becoming dramatically overripe in personality with bottle age. 2032-2085+. **92?**

2020 Pommard “Rugiens”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Unlike the Pézerolles, the 2020 Rugiens does not push the envelope in terms of ripeness and is another absolutely beautiful bottle in the making in the domaine’s cellars this year. The bouquet is fresh, bright and deep, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, spit-roasted venison, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and chewy in personality, with broad shoulders, a great core of fruit, lovely soil undertow, fine focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic and tangy finish. Fine, fine juice in the making here. 2035-2090+. **93.**

Auxey-Duresses

Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Not surprisingly for folks who have been following the wines from Domaine Lafouge over the last decade or so, Gilles Lafouge has made utterly superb wines in the 2020 vintage. He started picking his chardonnay parcels on August 23rd and finished the last of his pinot noir parcels within the week. All of the domaine’s white wines come in between thirteen and 13.5 percent octane in this vintage and are absolutely precise, minerally-infused and very pure wines that strongly recall the wines from Domaine Roulot in their snap, lime-scented fruit tones and beautifully pure expressions of their underlying terroir. Not surprisingly, Monsieur Lafouge considers 2020 and absolutely exceptional vintage for white wines from his domaine, which he notes “have the fine acidity and minerality of 2014, but even better depth than that vintage.” Like so many estates in the Côte de Beaune, he observed that “yields for the white wines were very correct in 2020, but red wines were down on average about thirty percent in this vintage.” He felt that it was very important to keep the texture of the tannins as refined as possible in 2020, so he did not pigeages (punch-downs) at all for his red wines in this vintage and was content to simply pump over the juice for extraction, as he did not want to extract any coarseness in his tannins. His red wines are very black fruity in the style of the vintage, but also quite classically proportioned and beautifully reflective of their underlying terroir. All of the white wines had been assembled in tank in preparation for bottling early in the new year, but only the Aligoté had already been fined, so everything else was still in fine form for tasting on the 4th of December. There is a new (to me) wine in the cellar this year from Auxey-Duresses, a white wine bottling from the excellent premier cru vineyard of les Duresses. The wine hails from the lieu à dit in les Duresses called “Parapelle”, which sits right up at the summit of this vineyard in a very steep section that faces east and gets mostly morning sun. The first vintage produced of the Parapelle Blanc bottling was in 2019, so the 2020 was the first time that I had a chance to enjoy it. The wine is a fine new addition to the Domaine Lafouge lineup! I did not taste either the Bourgogne Blanc or Rouge bottlings this year (both just bottled ahead of my visit), nor the 2020 Meursault

“la Casse Tête” and hope the latter is still being produced; I did not think to ask about it during my visit, as all the samples had been prepared in small sample bottles prior to my arrival. A few of the Domaine Lafouge red wines show a distinct note of currant leaf in their aromatics, which I find very appealing, as I seldom find this in red wines outside of the Clos des Chênes vineyard in neighboring Volnay. So, I am always happy to see it in some of these Auxey-Duresses rouge bottlings, as I find it an excellent sign for their eventual complexity.



Gilles Lafouge in his tasting room at the new winery in Auxey-Duresses.

Vins Blancs

2020 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 Bourgogne Aligoté from Domaine Lafouge had already been fined, but seemed to be showing well at the time of my visit. This bottling is half barrel-fermented and half fermented in stainless steel and the combination works beautifully in 2020, as the wine offers up scents of green apple, lime, stony minerality and a pretty topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and racy, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, zesty finish. These vines are sixty years of age, so this is one of the top Aligoté bottlings one will come across in the Côte de Beaune. 2022-2035+. **89.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Boutonniers”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 les Boutonniers is one of the ripest white wine in the cellars this year, coming in at a svelte 13.2 percent octane! The wine is beautiful, offering up a complex nose of tart pear,

apple, lime blossoms, chalky soil tones, beeswax and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and tensile in personality, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and a long, zesty finish. I would be inclined to give this lovely wine a couple of years in the cellar and let some of its secondary layers unfurl. Fine juice. 2024-2045. **91.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Hautés”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Hautés” from Monsieur Lafouge is another beautifully racy and minerally example of the vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of green apple, fresh lime, dried flowers, beeswax, limestone minerality and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and snappy, with a lovely core, excellent soil inflection and grip, bouncy acids and a very long, focused and very promising finish. Again, just a bit of patience will be handsome dividends with this excellent young wine. 2025-2045. **91+.**

2020 Meursault- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The Meursault *villages* bottling from Domaine Lafouge hails primarily from the *lieu à dit* of le Clou *Dessus*, and this parcel is one of the warmer microclimates in Meursault, so the wine actually reached 13.5 percent octane in this solar vintage. However, the wine remains true to the house style here and is precise, minerally-infused and very pure, offering up scents of apple, pear, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a floral topnote that suggests geranium. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and full, with a nice sense of generosity on the attack, a fine core, lovely mineral undertow, zesty acids and lovely backend lift on the long and beautifully balanced finish. This will drink with more generosity right out of the blocks than either of the Auxey Blanc bottlings above. Fine juice. 2022-2045. **91.**

2020 Meursault “Meix Chavaux”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Gilles Lafouge’s 2020 Meix Chavaux bottling is stellar. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of pear, apple, almond, chalky soil tones, fruit blossoms, a hint of iodine and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with an excellent core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and cut, a refined girdle of acidity and superb focus on the long, complex and vibrant finish. Gorgeous wine. 2024-250+. **93.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Duresses” Dit Parapelle- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 version, or second vintage ever produced of the les Duresses Blanc “Dit Parapelle” *chez* Lafouge is outstanding and every bit as refined and vibrant as the beautiful Meix Chavaux this year. The nose offers up scents of apple, sweet quince, fresh lime, a touch of paraffin, beautiful limestone minerality, bee pollen and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and racy, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, lovely focus and grip and a long, impeccably balanced finish. A first class bottle in the making. 2024-2050. **93.**

Vins Rouges

2020 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 Auxey rouge *villages* bottling is a lovely bottle in the making *chez* Lafouge. The nose is quite black fruity this year, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, dark berries, bonfire, espresso, dark soil tones and a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, focused and full, with a lovely core of fruit, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This will need some bottle age to blossom, but will be a lovely drink once it is ready. 2027-2055. **90.**

2020 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “les Ecusseaux”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 les Ecusseaux from Monsieur Lafouge is really a beautiful wine in the making this year. The bouquet is sappy and black fruity, offering up a fine blend of sweet dark berries, cassis, coffee bean, a touch of currant leaf, dark soil tones, cigar smoke and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with bright acids, fine focus and balance and a long, ripely tannic and promising finish. This will need some time to hibernate, but it is going to be a superb value. 2032-2080. **92+**.

2020 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “Climat du Valle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 Climat du Valle was also showing excellent potential, but again, this will be a wine built for the cellar and patience will be required to catch it in full bloom! This wine had the shortest yields of the vintage (only forty percent of a normal crop) and the wine has ended up rock solid as a result, albeit also still very elegant in profile. The nose wafts from the glass in a youthful mix of cassis, dark berries, a touch of chicory, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke, *pigeon* and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and structured, with a superb core, firm, chewy tannins, tangy acids and a long, soil-driven and beautifully balanced finish. Just add the passage of time. 2035-2080. **92**.

2020 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “la Chapelle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The fine premier cru of la Chapelle did not suffer from the same draconian yields as the Climat du Valle this year and the wine has utterly classical proportions as a result. The beautiful bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, a touch of cocoa powder, lovely soil tones, currant leaf, bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a fine core, excellent soil undertow, already impressive complexity and a long, poised and seamlessly tannic finish that closes with excellent mineral drive and lift. Great juice. 2032-2080+. **94**.

2020 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “les Duresses”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2020 les Duresses rouge was also absolutely singing at the time of my visit to Domaine Lafouge. The nose is pure and classy, offering up a fine constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, a superb base of soil tones, bonfire, cedar and a nice touch of coffee bean in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core of fruit, lovely soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and impeccable balance on the long, focused and complex finish. Another stellar bottle in the making. 2035-2080+. **94**.

2020 Pommard “les Chanlins”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Monsieur Lafouge included thirty percent whole clusters in the 2020 Pommard “les Chanlins” and the wine is another absolutely superb example of the vintage. The very refined nose wafts from the glass in a blend of black cherries, black plums, *pigeon*, a lovely base of soil tones, bonfire, currant leaf, bitter chocolate and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and rock solid at the core, with a full-bodied and seamless format, lovely balance and grip, ripe, beautifully-integrated tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This will be such an elegant rendition of Pommard when it is fully mature! 2040-2090. **94**.

Meursault**Domaine Coche-Dury**

I had a lovely visit at Domaine Coche-Dury this year, as Raphaël Coche invited the superb Chinon winegrower, Phillip Alliet and his small group to join us for the tasting. As I have been an admirer of Monsieur Alliet’s wines for many, many years, but had never had the chance

to visit the domaine in Cravant-les-Coteaux during my trips to Chinon, I was delighted to have the chance to taste with Monsieur Alliet, and I left the tasting with a couple of bottles of Chinon to also sample during my stay in Beaune! A pretty good visit, especially since we tasted the full range of Monsieur Coche's stellar 2019s during the tasting as well. Raphaël Coche prefers to show his wines only after they have been bottled and have recovered from their mise, which always makes the tasting here one vintage behind most of the others I organize on my November and December visits to Burgundy, but I really like this approach, as it gives the opportunity to taste wines that are completely finished and it is a nice break from so many barrel samples during these long trips. Monsieur Coche and his harvesting team got started picking on September 7th in 2019, which is still pretty early by contemporary standards, but is dramatically different than the August starts of almost all top domaines for the 2020 vintage.

Vins Blancs

2019 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Coche-Dury

For decades now, the Bourgogne Blanc bottling at Domaine Coche-Dury has been the gold standard for this appellation and the 2019 will be yet another stellar example. The wine offers up a lovely bouquet of lemon, pear, almond, chalky soil tones, a hint of *crème patissière* and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, good soil undertow, fine focus and grip and a long, complex finish. Fine juice. 2022-2035. **90.**

2019 Meursault- Domaine Coche-Dury

As we were a group of five tasters, I did not get a chance to ask which *lieu à dit* bottling this was from the domaine. Unless Raphaël has changed things since his father's day, there are usually a Tillets, Narvaux and Vireuils *Dessus* bottlings here, and they have typically not been blended, but just sold under the straight Meursault AC label. In any event, no matter which vineyard it hails from, the wine is outstanding in 2019, delivering a complex bouquet of apple, passion fruit, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, just a hint of iodine, almond, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a lovely core of ripe fruit, excellent cut and backend mineral drive and a long, zesty and beautifully balanced finish. Great juice. 2025-2050+. **93.**

2019 Meursault "Rougeots"- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Rougeots from Raphaël Coche is another excellent wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a ripe and vibrant blend of apple, tangerine, hazelnut, a fine base of chalky soil tones, iodine and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and deep at the core, with a full-bodied format, bright acids, lovely balance and grip and a long, complex and energetic finish. This has a bit more puppy fat out of the blocks than the straight Meursault bottling, but it also has a beautiful foundation of minerality. 2026-2055. **93+.**

2019 Meursault "Chevaliers"- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Meursault "Chevaliers" from the Coche family is a beautiful example of the vintage. The wine offers up a very refined aromatic constellation of passion fruit, apple, limestone minerality, a touch of iodine, hazelnut, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully defined by its foundation of minerality, with a very good core of fruit, racy acids, superb focus and grip and a long, complex and nicely reserved finish. This has excellent backend structural tension. 2026-2060. **94.**

2019 Meursault “Caillerets”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Caillerets from Domaine Coche-Dury is another lovely bottle, but it is a bit more delicately structured than the Chevaliers and does not possess quite the same cut and backend lift as that wine. The bouquet is complex and already quite lovely, offering up scents of apple, pear, almond, a touch of *crème patissière*, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core, pretty soil undertow and sound acids, that give brightness to the wine, but do not provide quite the same backend snap as is found in the last two wines. 2025-2050. **93.**

2019 Puligny-Montrachet “les Enseignères”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Puligny-Montrachet “les Enseignères” from the Coche family is another lovely wine, but this is more typical of what I think of as the easy-going, wide open style that is emblematic of so many 2019 white Burgundies. The bouquet is already quite expressive, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, peach, almond, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, vanillin oak and just a hint of iodine in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with good soil inflection, lovely focus and balance and a long, bouncy and succulent finish that will drink well from the moment it is released. Good juice, but I like the cut of the Meursault bottlings this year. 2022-2045. **92+.**

2019 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Meursault “Genevrières” from Domaine Coche-Dury is a stunning young wine. The beautiful bouquet delivers a refined and very complex blend of apple, passion fruit, a touch of tangerine, salty, chalky minerality, hazelnut, white lilies, a dollop of iodine and a very refined framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and vibrant, with a great core of fruit, stunning backend mineral drive, laser-like focus and a very, very long, very pure and vibrant finish. This will drink fairly early on in its evolution for this cuvée, but the wine has a lovely spine of acidity to also carry it far into the future. Fine, fine juice. 2025-2060. **95.**

2019 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine Coche-Dury

Raphaël Coche’s 2019 Meursault “Perrières” is another stunningly example of the vintage. The deep, pure and precise nose wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, clementine, passion fruit, iodine, stony minerality, incipient notes of pastry cream, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very, very long, with a beautiful core of perfectly ripe fruit, great mineral drive and grip and a long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. A thing of beauty. 2027-2065. **95+.**

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Coche-Dury is another brilliant young wine. The bouquet is bright, pure and complex, offering up scents of apple, pear, a touch of passion fruit, *crème patissière*, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, white flowers, citrus zest, almond, a dollop of iodine and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and powerfully built, with broad shoulders, a rock solid core, superb mineral drive and grip and a very long, snappy and nascently complex finish. This is going to be a long distance runner by the standards of the 2019 vintage and will need a good half dozen years before it really starts to stir. 2028-2065+. **96+.**



Vins Rouges

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Coche-Dury Bourgogne Rouge is a fine bottle in the making, offering up impressive depth of fruit on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of dark berries, red and black cherries, a touch of nutskin, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really has good stuffing for its appellation, with a bit of backend tannin and a long, cool finish. Fine juice. 2024-2035+. **89.**

2019 Meursault “Côte de Beaune” Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

The Meursault “Côte de Beaune” Rouge bottling from Domaine Coche-Dury is such a singular wine, as there are so few red Meursaults still produced, but I always love its unique aromatic and flavor signature and the 2019 version is another lovely bottle in the making. The refined nose jumps from the glass in a beautiful blend of sweet dark berries, cherries, a touch of currant leaf, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and coffee bean. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core of black fruit, lovely soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. Fine juice. 2026-2055. **92.**

2019 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Auxey-Duresses from Raphaël Coche is a beautiful wine in the making. The bouquet is deep and refined, offering up a lovely aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, chalky soil tones, gamebird, a hint of fresh herb tones and an exotic topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely

focus and grip, ripe, buried tannins and impressive complexity on the long, balanced and velvety finish. This is always such a good wine *chez* Coche and the 2019 is another stellar example. 2027-2055+. **92+**.

2019 Monthélie “Côte de Beaune”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2019 Monthélie “Côte de Beaune” from Domaine Coche-Dury is another beautifully sappy bottle in the making, with a more black fruity personality than the Auxey-Duresses. The nose jumps from the glass in an expressive blend of plums, black cherries, espresso, *pigeon*, bonfire, a lovely base of dark soil tones and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already nicely plush on the attack, with a sappy core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2055+. **92+**.

2019 Volnay “Premier Cru”- Domaine Coche-Dury

Domaine Coche’s 2019 Volnay “Premier Cru” is another simply beautiful, seamless and succulent example of the vintage. The bouquet is pure, complex and sappy, offering up scents of red plums, cherries, *pigeon*, a lovely array of spice tones, woodsmoke, a complex foundation of dark soil tones, new oak and a bit of laurel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthfully complex, with a superb core of pure fruit, excellent mineral drive and grip, suave, buried tannins and a long, poised and very classy finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Volnay. 2031-2075+. **94**.

Domaine Arnaud Ente

Arnaud Ente and his harvesting team got started picking on August 17th of 2020, as he was aiming to keep the alcohol levels in a normal range in this very hot summer. He ended up being quite successful in this respect, as the white wines came in between 12.9 and 13.5 percent octane in 2020, which is really a most respectable range, given how easy it could have been to get much higher alcohol levels in this vintage. In fact, I heard stories (but did not taste any example) of wines that got all the way up to 16.3 percent alcohol in 2020, so the risk of out of control sugars were certainly very real going into the picking. Yields for the white wine vineyards here were relatively small in 2020, ranging from thirty-five to forty hectoliters per hectare, with the reds a bit shorter still, coming in between twenty-seven and thirty hectoliters per hectare. The white wines here will all want at least a couple of years’ worth of bottle age before broaching, as they are tightly-knit and have lovely undercarriages of acidity that should be allowed to relax before the wines are drunk. This is even true of the domaine’s excellent Bourgogne Blanc this year. However, they also all share a lovely succulence of perfectly ripe fruit, so that they will be quite generous wines once they start to blossom, with the beautiful fruit tones vying for attention with the superb underlying mineral expressions in each wine.

2020 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Monsieur Ente’s 2020 Bourgogne Blanc is a lovely bottle, coming in at 12.9 percent octane and offering up a bright and stylish nose of apple, tart orange, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and pure, with a good core, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long and classy finish. A fine, fine example. 2024-2040. **90**.

2020 Meursault- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The Domaine Ente Meursault *villages* bottling is quite typical of the ripeness level of these 2020s, as the wine comes in at 13.2 percent alcohol and delivers lovely freshness, mineral

signature and structural tension on the palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy blend of apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, just a whisper of iodine, citrus peel, vanillin oak and a bit of upper register geranium. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and racy, with a superb core of fruit, fine focus and grip, bright acids and a long, beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2025-2050. **92+**.

2020 Meursault “Clos des Ambres”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2020 Clos des Ambres from Domaine Ente is another outstanding wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and precise, offering up scents of pear, tangerine, a youthful hint of pink grapefruit, almond, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more reserved in personality than the *villages*, with a superb core of fruit, lovely focus and grip, bright acids and a very long, elegant and promising finish. This is going to be outstanding. 2026-2055. **93**.

2020 Meursault “Petits Charrons”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The Petits Charrons here never has quite the same core as the Clos des Ambres, but I love its always refined and floral persona, which is especially evident in the 2020. The superb aromatic constellation of apple, orange zest, a touch of iodine, a beautiful base of minerality, hazelnut, vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote redolent of geraniums and orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and racy, with a lovely touch of ripe fruit in the mid-palate, excellent mineral drive and cut, snappy acids and superb length and grip on the long and perfectly balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2025-2055. **93+**.

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2020 Referts is another lovely bottle in the making *chez* Ente. The bouquet is pure and classy, offering up scents of apple, white peach, chalky soil tones, citrus peel, fruit blossoms and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and seamlessly balanced, with zesty acids, lovely focus and backend bounce, a very good core of fruit and a long, complex and vibrant finish. 2026-2055+. **93+**.

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Monsieur Ente’s parcel of vines in Champ Gains were planted in 1956, so these are older than those in Referts and the 2020 Champ Gains shows a bit more depth and inherent complexity as a result. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of apple, passion fruit, a touch of tangerine, spring flowers, hints of the beeswax to come, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with a superb core of fruit, excellent backend mineral drive, zesty acids and impeccable focus and balance on the long and complex finish. Great juice. 2027-2060. **94**.

2020 Meursault “la Sève du Clos”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Not surprisingly, the 2020 Meursault “la Sève du Clos” from Domaine Ente is a stunning young wine. The bouquet is very, very precise and complex, offering up scents of passion fruit, pear, hazelnut, a complex base of chalky minerality, just a touch of iodine, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, racy and absolutely rock solid at the core, with superb mineral cut, bright, zesty acids, superb focus and grip and a very, very long, nascently complex and utterly refined finish. 2030-2065+. **95**.

2020 Meursault “la Goutte d’Or”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2020 la Goutte d’Or from Arnaud Ente is another brilliant wine in the making. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of apple, pear, a hint of tangerine, hazelnut, a very complex base of chalky minerality, again, a dollop of youthful iodine, geranium, vanillin oak and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and

flawlessly balanced, with a wonderful sense of *sucrosité* to the pure fruit at the core, marvelous soil signature and grip, bright, bouncy acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long, refined and seamlessly balanced finish that closes with a youthful touch of orange peel. This is stunning juice. 2030-2065+. **96+**.

2020 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Arnaud Ente

There is a nice touch of that rare red fruit to the aromatic profile of the 2020 Bourgogne Rouge from Monsieur Ente that is very attractive. The nose wafts from the glass in a blend of red berries, black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, dark soil tones, coffee bean and a topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off a lovely core for its level, with good soil undertow, tangy acids and just a touch of backend tannin perking up the finish. Lovely wine. 2025-2040. **90**.

2020 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

I think the first vintage I ever tasted *sur place* at Domaine Ente was the 1995, and yet not until this visit did I know that the domaine’s vines for this bottling are located in the vineyard of Santenots du Milieu! I had always listed it as straight Santenots, and I know that some of my older vintages were labeled that way, but the wine is actually from the superior Santenots du Milieu vineyard next door. In any case, the 2020 vintage of this wine is stellar, offering up a beautiful bouquet of black plums, red and black cherries, pomegranate, woodsmoke, gamebird, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, just a touch of new oak and a lovely topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off exemplary depth in the mid-palate, with tangy acids, lovely focus and grip, ripe, buried tannins and excellent backend lift on the very long and refined finish. This will be a true long distance runner and need plenty of cellaring time before it blossoms, but it strikes me as the finest young Volnay I have had the pleasure to taste from Arnaud Ente! 2034-2085+. **95**.

Domaine des Comtes Lafon

I arrived on quite an important day at Domaine des Comtes Lafon on December 9th of this past year, for this was the last official day for Dominique Lafon to remain at the head of the family estate, as his retirement was set to become official the following day. Dominique has been working full-time at the domaine since 1984 and took over officially for his father, René Lafon, as head of the estate in 1988. He has had a magnificently successful career and leaves Domaine des Comtes Lafon in remarkable shape, given how close it was to being split up and sold only two generations ago, before his father stepped in to take over the reins of the property, while still working full-time as an engineer in Paris. For subscribers who may not have seen the historical feature I wrote back in the spring of 2012 on Domaine des Comtes Lafon and Dominique’s long and very successful career here, it can be found in Issue Thirty-Nine or through the database. In any case, as one might imagine, Dominique had a myriad of last second things to take care of on his last official day in charge of the family property, so after saying hello, I settled in to taste the 2020s with his son, Pierre Lafon on this visit. Pierre is only fairly recently back home in Meursault, having lived for several years in Chicago, but has returned to the family domaine to assist his sister Léa Lafon in administering the property. The team at Comtes Lafon was out picking beginning on August 22nd in 2020, wishing to not let the heat push sugars too far north and they have done a lovely job of crafting a range of beautiful, classically-proportioned wines in this vintage. Among the fine red wines chez Lafon, the Monthélie “les Duresses” is certainly the ripest in the lineup, as it was picked after all the fruit in the domaine’s parcels in Volnay has been collected. Like so many other domaines in the Côte de Beaune in this vintage, Pierre Lafon

noted that yields for their chardonnay vineyards were quite “correct” in 2020, but the pinot noirs were off by fully fifty percent in this vintage. The white wines here were in varying stages of their élevage, with the Meursault “Charmes” still in cask, but many others already having been assembled in tank in anticipation for bottling fairly early in the new year. In many vintages chez Lafon, the white wines will still be in barrel and usually spend a second winter in cask before assembling, but Pierre reported that malolactic fermentations here were generally quite early and quick, so that many of the premier crus were ready to be racked into tank earlier as a result.



Pierre Lafon in the tasting room at Domaine des Comtes Lafon in Meursault.

Côte de Beaune Rouges

2020 Monthélie “les Duresses” Rouge- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Monthélie “les Duresses” Rouge from the Lafon family is the only red wine here that shows a bit of extra concentration and ripeness from the vintage’s characteristics, as the bouquet offers up a quite exuberant blend of black raspberries, a touch of fruitcake, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of new oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and tangy, with a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is not as powerful as some red wines in 2020, but it does show a touch of the concentrating effect from desiccated berries that were so prevalent in this vintage, and which none of the Volnays *chez* Lafon share. It is still a good, solid wine. 2027-2050+. **89.**

2020 Volnay- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Happily, despite the very short red grape yields in 2020, the Volnay *villages* bottling was produced in this vintage. This is made up entirely from younger vine parcels in the Santenots du Milieu premier cru vineyard, which were replanted in 2002 and 2005, so these vines are now starting to reach a good age. The wine is quite lovely, offering up fine purity on the nose in its mix of dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, a fine base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a lovely touch of currant leaf in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a good core of black fruit, ripe, suave tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is a lovely *villages* bottling. 2030-2065. **90+**.

2020 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Clos des Chênes from Domaine des Comtes Lafon is a very lovely example of the vintage. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, cassis, a touch of fresh herbs woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a complex base of dark soil tones, coffee bean and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, complex and nicely transparent in personality, with a good core of fruit, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long and complex finish. Fine juice. 2032-2080. **92+**.

2020 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Volnay “Champans” from the Lafon family is also very pure, precise and quite classical in profile. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of black plums, cassis, currant leaf, gamebird, a fine base of soil tones, espresso and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pure, with a fine core of black fruit, lovely soil undertow, ripe, chewy tannins and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Like the Clos des Chênes, this will need a fair bit of time in the cellar to blossom, but it will be a lovely wine once it is ready to drink. 2034-2080+. **93**.

2020 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Santenots du Milieu *chez* Lafon is excellent. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of cassis, dark berries, French roast, spit-roasted gamebird, a touch of dark chocolate, a beautiful base of soil, bonfire, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a plush core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, ripe, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and excellent focus on the long, complex and vibrant finish. Great juice. 2033-2080. **94**.

Côte de Beaune Blancs

2020 Meursault- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Meursault *villages* had only been assembled into tank a week prior to my visit, but was still showing quite well, offering up a complex nose of apple, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, a touch of vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, bright and tangy, with a good core, fine soil undertow, good focus and balance and a long, complex finish. A fine bottle of AC that should drink very nicely right from release. 2022-2040. **91**.

2020 Meursault “Désirée”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Meursault “Désirée” from Domaine des Comtes Lafon had also just been assembled a week prior to my visit. The wine is very pretty on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a lovely base of limestone soil, almond, citrus peel and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the is bright, full-bodied and really shows off a lovely core of fruit

this year, with good soil, bright acids and a long, complex and zesty finish. Good juice. 2022-2050+. **91+**.

2020 Meursault “Clos de la Barre”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The Clos de la Barre was one of the very last vineyards picked in 2020 and the wine has more depth and concentration in its personality as a result. The bouquet offers up a fine combination of apple, tangerine, hazelnuts, a fine base of chalky soil elements, geraniums and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and tangy, with a rock solid core, lovely focus and balance, bright acids and a long, focused and quite powerful finish this year. This is a very good bottle in the making, but it was a bit more adolescent in personality at the time of my visit and as a result, I might be underestimating it just a touch. 2025-2060. **91+**.

2020 Meursault “Bouchères”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

In contrast to the Clos de la Barre, the inherently warm microclimate of Bouchères made this the very first parcel of vines picked on August 22nd in 2020. The decision to pick this vineyard early has paid dividends, as the wine has turned out beautifully. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a refined blend of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a lovely base of soil tones, gentle smokiness, vanillin oak and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is bright, complex and full-bodied, with a fine girdle of zesty acidity, lovely depth at the core, good soil signature and a long, vibrant and complex finish. Fine juice that will want a bit of bottle age to fully blossom. 2025-2060+. **93**.

2020 Meursault “Goutte d’Or”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Time does go by, as I still continue to think of the Goutte d’Or *chez* Lafon as produced from younger vines, but these parcels were replanted back in 1990 and the vines are now fully thirty years of age! The wine has turned out beautifully in 2020, delivering a superb nose of apple, pear, a touch of fresh coconut, chalky soil elements, geraniums, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with vibrant acids, lovely focus and grip and impressive backend mineral drive on the long and complex finish. This is really stellar this year. 2026-2060+. **93+**.

2020 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The Lafon family decided to pick their parcel in Poruzots last in 2020, but the wine does not show any of the slightly more concentrated personality traits found in the Clos de la Barre this year, as the wine is utterly refined, classical and stunning. The nose delivers a fine aromatic constellation of apple, passion fruit, a hint of iodine, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, orange zest, fruit blossoms and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and beautifully solid at the core, with excellent backend mineral drive, impeccable balance and grip, bright acids and a long, complex and energetic finish. This is a beautiful wine. 2028-2065. **94**.

2020 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Genevrières from the Lafon family is a beautiful young wine. The utterly refined nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, almond, salty limestone minerality, fresh coconut, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, great backend mineral drive and cut, racy acids and a very, very long, laser-like finish. Great juice. 2027-2065+. **95**.

2020 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Charmes was one of the few premier crus here not already assembled, and it was absolutely singing from its cask sample. The bouquet offers up a pure, beautifully ripe and classic constellation of apple, passion fruit, tangerine, a touch of fresh coconut, hazelnuts, gentle smokiness, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright,

full-bodied and already quite suave on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, a fine girdle of acidity and a long, focused, complex and perfectly balanced finish. 2027-2065+. **95.**

2020 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Like several other of the premier crus *chez* Lafon, the 2020 Perrières had only been assembled a week before my visit, and this was the one wine that still seemed a bit reticent as a result of its recent racking. Consequently, I have scored this in a range and would fully expect it to place at the high end of that point spread, once it is back in perfect form. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, almond, stony limestone minerality, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, mineral-driven and snappy, with a rock solid core of fruit, lovely balance and a very long, zesty and youthful finish. Given how beautifully some of the other premier crus are singing today, one has to assume that there is more here than meets the eye at the present time. 2028-2075+. **95-96.**

2020 Montrachet- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2020 Montrachet from Domaine des Comtes Lafon was fully on form and there was no need for any range for this truly beautiful young wine! The bouquet soars from the glass in a very refined blend of apple, pear, fresh coconut, macadamia nut, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and utterly seamless, with a lovely core of fruit, great soil signature, bright, zesty acids and outstanding length and grip on the long, focused and supremely elegant finish. An utter classic. 2030-2080. **97+.**

Puligny-Montrachet

Domaine Jacques Carillon

Jacques Carillon is very happy with the quality of his 2020s. He is another vigneron who compares his white wines to the 2014 vintage, due to their beautifully bright acidity, but he notes “that I think 2020 is even a little bit better than 2014, for we have even better ripeness to go along with the good acidity.” Monsieur Carillon started harvesting on August 23rd in 2020 and reports that all of his wines have come in between thirteen and 13.5 percent octane in this vintage. This is quite a bit below the levels of his 2019s, which fell between 13.8 and 14.3 percent in that sunnier vintage. Jacques Carillon describes his 2020s as very classical in style, with excellent minerality defining each wine and he feels that they will be best off if allowed to blossom in the cellar for five or six years before starting to drink them. He comments that “the 2019s will be the better vintage to drink over the next few years, as they are already very generous, and the 2020s will be better for some aging in the cellar.” As is customary at this time of the year chez Carillon, the 2020s had all been assembled in tank for the winter and would start to be bottled early in the new year.

2020 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2020 Puligny *villages* from Monsieur Carillon is a stellar example. The bouquet is deep, bright and precise, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, peach, a touch of tangerine, chalky soil tones, a dollop of almond and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, snappy and complex, with a fine core, serious soil signature, bright acids and lovely cut and grip on the long and youthful finish. This will only need a few years to blossom nicely. 2024-2050. **91+.**



Jacques Carillon in the morning sun of early December just outside the door to his cellars in Puligny.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2020 Chassagne AC bottling was a touch more reserved in personality than the Puligny at the time of my visit in early December and this wine will probably want at least a year longer in the cellar before it blossoms properly. The nose is quite promising, offering up scents of pear, fresh pineapple, a lovely base of soil tones, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit buttoned up today behind its girdle of acidity, with a fine core of fruit, excellent focus and balance and a long, classy finish. I like this very well indeed, but the Puligny seems to have a bit more inherent soil complexity to its personality than the Chassagne, and for this reason, I give the former a very slight edge in 2020. 2025-2050. **91.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Canet”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The Domaine Carillon 2020 Champs Canet is an absolutely beautiful bottle of Puligny in the making. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of pear, white peach, lemon, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, a touch of hazelnut, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and full, with a superb core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and cut, bright, snappy acids and a very long, complex and well-balanced that closes with a note of orange peel. Fine, fine juice. 2026-2060. **93.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières” - Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2020 Perrières bottling from Monsieur Carillon is another stellar bottle in the making. The bouquet is already gorgeous, jumping from the glass in a mix of lemon, apple, pear,

a hint of pastry cream, beautiful limestone minerality, vanillin oak, citrus zest and a floral topnote redolent of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, snappy and a bit more reserved than the nose suggests, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb backend mineral drive, fine focus and grip and a long, seamless and vibrant finish. 2027-2060. **93+**.

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2020 Referts from Jacques Carillon is every bit as vibrant and precise on the nose as the previous two premier crus, but it also shows just a touch more depth and this will be the best of a marvelous trio of wines when it is fully mature. The bouquet delivers a combination of apple, pear, fresh almond, a complex base of chalky minerality, citrus peel, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, tightly-knit and very elegant in profile, with a superb core of fruit, great soil signature, bright, snappy acids and laser-like focus on the long and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2028-2065. **94**.

2020 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2020 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet from Monsieur Carillon is an utterly stunning young wine and there cannot be too many white Burgundies in this vintage that are better than this magical bottle. The bouquet is young, pure and oh, so promising, as it soars from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, lemon, pastry cream, a very refined base of chalky soil tones, lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and flawless, with a stunning core of fruit, beautifully complex soil undertow, bright, zesty acids, great focus and grip and a very, very, very long, vibrant and complex finish. This is utterly classical in personality and a brilliant wine in the making. 2030-2080. **97+**.

Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron has fashioned a truly lovely range of wines in the 2020 vintage. As is customary when visiting in late November or early December here, a few wines had already been bottled and everything else, up to the level of the grand crus, was already assembled in tank and would be bottled starting in early February of 2022. The Bourgogne Blanc, Hautes Côtes de Beaune and Rully were the wines that had been bottled just before harvest time 2021, with all of the wines in tank having been fined on the 3rd of November. As I was visiting on December 9th, the wines had recovered nicely from their fining and were showing very well indeed. Readers may recall that Domaine Chartron used to produce one of the finest examples of Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets” in all the Côte, but several years ago the old vines in this vineyard had to be replanted and it has been missing from their lineup now for many vintages. Starting in 2020, the new vines here make a bit of a comeback in the lineup, as they are now old enough to have found their way into the blend for the Chassagne-Montrachet villages bottling chez Chartron, and their addition is notable in the finished Chassagne AC this year. Jean-Michel Chartron has also decided that his entire lineup will be bottled under Diam beginning with the 2020 vintage, as he has been very happy with how the cuvées he has bottled under this closure in recent vintages have aged under Diam. Jean-Michel has given up his lovely parcel of chardonnay vines in the premier cru vineyard of Pimentiers in Savigny-lès-Beaune, and has replaced it with a Savigny “villages” Blanc bottling beginning in 2020, which he is making from purchased grapes. As he recounted, “it just did not make sense anymore to have to take my tractor up the Route Nationale and around the peripherique in Beaune to work those vines in Pimentiers, even though I loved the wine we made from there, as that is really a very, very long way to go from Puligny to Savigny- on a tractor!” In exchange for the Pimentiers, he received a parcel of old vines in the premier cru of Hameau Blagny in Puligny, as part of the INAO’s plan

to rationalize vineyard ownership a bit throughout the Côte d'Or by organizing such exchanges. Jean-Michel decided to flesh out the Hameau de Blagny bottling with some fruit from Pucelles and Caillerets this year and bottle a Puligny "Premier Cru" Vieilles Vignes from the new parcel, which is really a lovely wine and will be worth keeping an eye out for, as it will be a very good value.

2020 Bourgogne Blanc "Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Jean Chartron

The Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Chartron wears two labels these days, as it is bottled as Bourgogne "Côte d'Or" for the French market and as "Vieilles Vignes" now for export. But, it is all the same cuvée. The 2020 version is lovely, offering up scents of apple, peach, chalky soil tones, white flowers and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full, with crisp acids, a juicy core of fruit and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. All the vines for this bottling are in Puligny. Good juice. 2022-2030. **89.**

2020 Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc "En Bois Guilleman"- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc *chez* Chartron was also showing very nicely, having recovered from its August bottling. The bouquet delivers scents of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of fresh almond, fruit blossoms and just a touch of oak. On the palate the wine deep, focused and a touch fuller-bodied and the Bourgogne this year, with a nice core of fruit, good mineral drive, bright acids and sneaky length on the well-balanced finish. 2022-2030+. **89+.**

2020 Rully "Montmorin"- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel's 2020 Rully "Montmorin" bottling was also showing very nicely in early December, having recovered from its *mise* and offering up a lovely bouquet of apple, pear, lime peel, stony minerality and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and well-balanced, with a good core and soil signature this year, bright acids and a long, classy finish. Rully has been a strong bottling here since all the way back in the mid-1980s, when I first started selling the Chartron family's wines. 2022-2035. **90.**

2020 Santenay "les Pierres Sèches"- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Santenay "les Pierres Sèches" from Domaine Jean Chartron is another excellent bottle in the making. The bouquet is very stylish, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, pastry cream, lemon zest and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a good core, zesty acids and a long, well-balanced and bouncy finish. This is really quite delicious. 2023-2040. **90+.**

2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Jean Chartron

The new 2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc, made from purchased grapes, is lovely in 2020. The wine delivers a very refined, vibrant nose of apple, pear, spring flowers, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, a touch of almond, incipient notes of *crème patissière* and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the e palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, bright acids, lovely focus and balance and a long, classy finish. Fine juice. 2022-2040. **91.**

2020 Pernand-Vergelesses "les Belles Filles"- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Pernand-Vergelesses "les Belles Filles" from Jean-Michel Chartron is another excellent value in the domaine's lineup this year. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of pear, apple, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, a touch of citrus peel, vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote redolent of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is

bright, full-bodied and pure, with a fine core of fruit, impressive soil signature, zesty acids and lovely balance on the long and vibrant finish. A lovely example. 2022-2045. B91.

2020 Meursault “les Pierres”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Meursault “les Pierres” bottling from Domaine Chartron is composed half of fruit from les Tillets and half from Narvaux, so this is a pretty high pedigree *villages*. The 2020 version has turned out beautifully, delivering a fine nose of apple, passion fruit, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, just a hint of pastry cream and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and zesty, with a fine core, lovely mineral undertow, bright acids and a long, promising and still nicely reserved finish. Good juice, but give it a few years in the cellar to fully blossom. 2024-2045+. **92.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Benoités”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Chassagne *villages* bottling is definitely showing the addition of the younger vine fruit from Caillerets in it this year, as the wine is very refined aromatically, offering up scents of apple, pear, a fine base of chalky minerality, lemon blossoms and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, bright and full, with fine focus and grip, zesty acids, a fine core of fruit and a long, soil-driven and quite elegant finish. 2023-2050. **91.**

2020 St. Aubin “Perrières”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 St. Aubin “Perrières” from Monsieur Chartron is another excellent wine. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a fine blend of pear, peach, stony soil tones, orange zest, spring flowers, fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved out of the blocks (as behooves a premier cru), with a good core of fruit, fine mineral drive and grip, bright acids and a long, focused and quite promising finish. This will only need a year or two in the cellar to really start hitting on all cylinders. 2023-2050. **92.**

2020 St. Aubin “Murgers des Dents de Chien”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Murgers des Dents de Chien bottling from Jean-Michel is also outstanding in this vintage. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of pear, tangerine, a complex base of chalky minerality, fresh almond, *crème patissière*, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and crisp, with a lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature, vibrant acids and lovely focus and cut on the long, complex and very classy finish. This is very, very good Saint-Aubin! 2025-2050+. **93.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Puligny *villages* bottling was the one wine that I thought was still a bit unsettled from its early November fining and not showing to full advantage. It offers up scents of apple, white peach, chalky soil tones, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, reserved and shows good depth at the core, with bright acids and good length, but it was a bit out of sorts and not showing the focus that I am sure will arrive once it settles back into its own with a bit more time in tank. I am sure it will be quite good. 2022-2045+. **90-91.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “les Enseignères”- Domaine Jean Chartron

There are four casks of les Enseignères in the Chartron cellars in 2020, with three hailing from the domaine’s own parcels and one made from a bit of purchased fruit in the vineyard to augment the size of the cuvée. This was showing beautifully at the time of my visit and is going to be another excellent value to be on the lookout for in the market, as it offers up a lovely bouquet of apple, nectarine, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, a touch of lime zest, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and complex, with a fine core of fruit, good chalky undertow, crisp acids and lovely focus on the long and vibrant finish. This is very, very good! 2024-2050+. **92.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Premier Cru” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Jean Chartron

The new Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes bottling of Puligny from Jean-Michel Chartron is eighty percent comprised of the production from the new parcel in Hameau de Blagny, augmented by twenty percent from a bit of Caillerets and Pucelles. Not a bad combination! The wine has turned out beautifully in 2020, delivering fine aromatic complexity in its bouquet of apple, fresh lemon, white peach, chalky soil tones, citrus zest, pastry cream and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, focused and full-bodied, with a good core, impressive complexity and grip, lovely balance and a long, zesty and focused finish. This is very good juice. 2025-2060. **93.**



Jean-Michel Chartron in his lab at the domaine in Puligny, which doubled as a tasting room for us this year.

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières” from Domaine Jean Chartron is an absolute classic example of this fine premier cru vineyard, offering plenty of depth on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of white peach, pear, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, *crème patissière*, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and zesty, with fine depth in the mid-palate, bright acids and lovely focus and balance on the long and complex finish. Fine juice, but built to blossom with a bit of time in the cellar. 2026-2055. **93+.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Pucelle”- Dom. Jean Chartron

The 2020 vintage of Clos de la Pucelles from Jean-Michel is absolutely stunning this year. The wine delivers a complex and very refined aromatic constellation of pear, apple, a touch of nectarine, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, fresh almond, lemon blossoms, incipient notes of pastry cream and very refined framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and properly reserved out of the blocks, with a great mid-palate core, superb mineral drive and cut, zesty acids and a very long, vibrant and complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2060. **94+.**

2020 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos des Caillerets”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Clos des Caillerets *chez* Chartron is even better! The stars must have aligned perfectly for this bottling, as I cannot recall ever tasting a more profound young vintage of this great cuvée. The bouquet soars from the glass in a complex blend of pear, apple, a stunningly complex base of chalky minerality, a touch of hazelnut, citrus zest, fresh nutmeg, vanillin oak and a potpourri of citrus blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, deep and very, very long, with laser-like focus, stunning backend mineral drive and a very, very long, seamless and electric finish. Utterly brilliant premier cru! 2026-2060. **96.**

2020 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Chartron is going to be an excellent wine. The bouquet is deep, young and vibrant, delivering scents of apple, pear, a beautiful base of stony limestone soil, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with an excellent girdle of acidity, fine mineral drive and cut and a long, balanced and racy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2070. **94+.**

2020 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2020 Bâtard-Montrachet from Jean-Michel Chartron is another star of the vintage in the making. The beautifully pure and precise nose wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, fresh lemon, white peach, chalky soil tones, raw almond, citrus zest and stylish framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, bright and classy, with a great core of fruit, a proper sense of reserve out of the blocks, beautiful soil undertow, zesty acids and a very, very long, perfectly balanced and nascently complex finish. 2030-2070. **95+.**

2020 Chevalier-Montrachet “Clos des Chevaliers”- Domaine Jean Chartron

As is always the case *chez* Chartron, the Clos des Chevaliers is again the finest wine in the cellar in 2020 and one of the best white wines produced in the Côte de Beaune in this vintage. The stunning bouquet delivers a constellation of pear, passion fruit, orange zest, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, a simply beautiful base of chalky soil tones, fresh almond, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, seamless and refined, with great depth at the core, vibrant acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, electric and elegant finish. Magical white Burgundy. 2030-2080. **97.**

Chassagne-Montrachet

Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau has made an absolutely stellar roster of 2020s, but this should come as no surprise, as he has been one of the top two or three white Burgundy producers in all of Burgundy for the last decade. Alex and his harvesting team starting gathering bunched on the 20th of August in 2020 and had everything picked and crushed by the 30th of the month. Like so many other producers in the Côte de Beaune, he reported that his yields for his white wine parcels

were quite good in this vintage, ranging from thirty-five hectoliters per hectare for the grand crus and some of the premiers, to fifty hectoliters for the Chassagne villages parcels, which is just where he wishes to be each year. As is customary here, the 2020 Bourgogne Blanc was bottled just ahead of the harvest of 2021 in September of this year, with all of the other white wine cuvées already having been assembled in tank in anticipation for bottling in the spring of the new year. The only white wine that was still in barrel was the 2020 Corton-Charlemagne. The lovely Saint-Aubin “en Remilly” and the Chassagne-Montrachet AC cuvées had already been fined, but all the other white wines in tank had simply been assembled, but were not yet fined and were showing beautifully during my visit on the 10th of December.

Vins Blancs

2020 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Moreau is a very fine example, offering up a refined nose of white peach, apple, a touch of raw almond, a fine base of chalky soil tones and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and juicy at the core, with lovely acids, good focus and grip and a long, complex finish. Good juice. 2022-2030. **89.**

2020 Saint Aubin “en Remilly”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The Domaine Moreau en Remilly is one of my favorite bottlings from Saint-Aubin and the 2020 is absolutely superb. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of pear, apple, salty, chalky minerality, spring flowers and a nice framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and vibrant, with a lovely girdle of acidity, a superb core and excellent backend mineral drive on the long and complex finish. 2022-2040+. **92.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau’s 2020 Chassagne *villages* bottling is another excellent wine, showing beautiful soil inflection, zesty acids, impeccable balance and simply beautiful fruit tones. The nose delivers scents of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of beeswax, gentle notes of new oak and a beautiful floral topnote redolent of lemon blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full and crisp, with a fine core, excellent minerality and a long, zesty and impeccably balanced finish. Fine, fine juice here. 2022-2050. **92.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Clos St. Jean”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Clos St. Jean was also showing beautifully in December. The wine has more mid-palate depth than the Chassagne *villages* cuvée, but is also a bit more reserved in personality at the present time (as it should be). The bouquet delivers a blend of pear, apple, orange zest, a lovely base of soil tones, hints of beeswax and a lovely foundation of vanillin oak. ON the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a superb core of fruit, fine soil undertow, a fine girdle of acidity and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This will need at least a couple of years in the cellar to fully blossom, but it will be a fine bottle in due course. 2025-2055. **92+.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vergers”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Domaine Moreau Vergers is a sleek and classy example of the vintage. The nose jumps from the glass in a beautifully expressive mix of pear, apple, a hint of fresh pineapple, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and succulent at the core, with lovely transparency and grip, bright, zesty acids and lovely balance on the long, complex and dancing finish. This has all the charm one can find in young Vergers when the vintage’s stars align! 2024-2055. **93.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex noted that the Chenevottes was the first vineyard picked on August 20th, as it is a warmer microclimate and he did not want to let the wine sneak past the beautiful point of ripeness it was showing at the outset of the harvest. The wine has turned out gorgeously, offering a complex aromatic constellation of pear, fresh pineapple, lemon blossoms, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, a hint of sweet butter and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, zesty and full, with a succulent core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and backend bounce, vibrant acids and beautiful focus and balance on the long, complex and extremely refined finish. Gorgeously juice. 2023-2055. **93+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The Maltroie bottling *chez* Moreau is always a bit more reserved than either the Vergers or Chenevottes and the 2020 version is no exception, but this too is going to be a beautiful wine once it blossoms. The nose is precise and vibrant, delivering a blend of apple, pear, wet stone minerality, incipient notes of beeswax, dried flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nicely reserved in personality, with a rock solid core, fine mineral drive, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Just add a modicum of bottle age and *voila*, a great bottle of Chassagne! 2026-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Champains”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Champains from Domaine Moreau is very, very floral in personality this year. The wine delivers a beautiful aromatic constellation of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a potpourri of floral scents in the upper register, principally redolent of honeysuckle and acacia blossoms. On the palate the wine is crisp, focused and full, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine soil inflection, bright acids and a long, complex and beautifully detailed finish. Like the Maltroie, this will demand some cellaring time before it starts to drink with generosity. 2026-2060. **93+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

And the best bottling of Morgeot in the village of Chassagne? It is excellent in 2020. The bouquet is youthful, but still perfectly delineated already and flat out beautiful, offering up scents of lemon, pear, a complex base of chalky soil tones, beeswax, white lilies, lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and zesty, with a lovely core, gorgeous soil signature, tangy acids and laser-like focus on the long, seamlessly balanced and electric finish. A stunning bottle in the making. 2026-2065. **94+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Caillerets *chez* Moreau is another brilliant young wine. The nose is pure, precise and complex, jumping from the glass in a blend of lemon, apple, pear, a gorgeously complex base of limestone minerality, beeswax, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is snappy, full-bodied and very deep at the core, with a beautiful synthesis of perfectly ripe fruit and mineral drive, vibrant acids and great cut and grip on the long, poised and seamless finish. 2026-2065. **94+**.

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Domaine Moreau Grandes Ruchottes is magical juice in the making. The wine is pure, racy, full-bodied and properly reserved in profile on the palate, with a rock solid core, stunning mineral complexity, snappy acids and beautiful balance on the long, complex and focused finish. The bouquet is young, but already marvelously complex, offering up scents of apple, pear, a touch of fresh almond, a gorgeous vein of chalky minerality, fruit blossoms and a

deft framing of vanillin oak. This wine has everything one could ever ask for from this great *terroir*- simply add the patience to let it climb to cruising altitude! 2027-2065. **95.**

2020 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Bernard Moreau is another breathtakingly beautiful wine in the making. The bouquet is deep, pure and complex, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of lemon, apple, pear, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms, paraffin, a touch of lemon oil and a beautiful base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and very refined, with a bottomless core of fruit, superb soil signature, bright acids and laser-like focus on the long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. 2030-2075+. **96.**



2020 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

I tasted some stunning young grand cru white Burgundies during my two and a half week trip to the region, but none were better than Alex Moreau's Chevalier-Montrachet! The flawless bouquet delivers a constellation of apple, pear, lemon zest, beeswax, a gorgeously complex base of limestone minerality, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, focused and elegant, with a great core of fruit, stunning soil inflection, zesty acids and perfect focus and balance on the very, very long, refined and complex finish. Simply stunning young Chevalier. 2030-2080. **100.**

2020 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Moreau is also a superb young white wine. The fruit for this bottling all hails from Aloxe-Corton and the wine delivers a refined bouquet of apple, pear, bee pollen, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of fresh almond, vanillin oak and a topnote of acacia blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, vibrant acids and superb focus and grip on the long, balanced and energetic finish. Great juice. 2030-2075+. **95.**

Vins Rouges

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge- Dom. Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Chassagne rouge old vine bottling comes in at an even thirteen percent octane in this vintage and is beautifully sappy and black fruity in personality. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of cassis, sweet blackberries, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, dark soil tones and a whisper of oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2030-2065+. **90.**

2020 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Cardeuse” Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 la Cardeuse bottling from Alex Moreau is another lovely, svelte and black fruity example of the vintage. The wine delivers a complex aromatic constellation of dark berries, cassis, espresso, a touch of balsam bough, a fine base of dark soil tones, gamebird, a dollop of new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and classy, with a rock solid core, excellent mineral drive and grip, fine-grained tannins and lovely balance on the long, focused and promising finish. 2033-2075+. **92.**

2020 Volnay “Santenots”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2020 Volnay “Santenots” from Domaine Bernard Moreau is another very refined example, with a touch more plushness on the attack and in the mid-palate than the two Chassagne *rouge* bottlings this year, but the same sense of precision and low octane. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy mix of black cherries, black plums, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, a touch of currant leaf and a gentle foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with a sappy core of fruit, lovely soil inflection and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 203-2080. **93.**

CHAMPAGNE AND SPARKLING WINES DECEMBER 2021



As I have mentioned in the last several issues, I am going to try and cover a bit of Champagne and Sparkling Wine in most issues of the newsletter going forward, as it seems like the best method to try and stay at least partially abreast of all the new releases coming into the market. In particular, the Champagne region is simply so dynamic right now that the number of estates making outstanding wines seems to grow with every passing day and the changes that continue to ripple through the region, particularly when it comes to improving the quality of the farming in the region, signal that things are only going to keep improving as winemakers end up with better and better fruit with which to work with in the cellars as more organic and biodynamic principles are put into place across the large mosaic of vineyard land in Champagne. There are also better and better ideas being utilized in the cellars here, including longer *elevage* of *vins clairs* prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation, often in older Burgundy casks or *foudres*, which certainly provides a more complex base wine with which to craft the eventual sparkling wines. One is also seeing more and more single vineyard, single *cépages* bottlings starting to be produced in the region, particularly among the younger generation of winegrowers, and this trend seems to also be producing some very, very exciting new wines.

A most recent convert to this concept is Aurélien Gerbais of Champagne Pierre Gerbais, located in the fine Côte des Bar village of Celles-sur-Ource. Monsieur Gerbais has just released a new series of non-vintage bottlings that are indeed based on single vineyard parcels and single varietals, for which he started for each cuvée dedicated soleras of perpetual reserve wines, with the earliest created as far back as 2011 in anticipation of launching these new single vineyard bottlings. While I was in Beaune in December I had a chance to taste the entire range of these new wines and they were exceptional in quality across the board, showing, to my palate, a significant step up in quality from the *maison's* previous blended bottlings for their non-vintage cuvées. There are currently four distinct single vineyard bottlings in his lineup: Champ Viole (made from one hundred percent chardonnay), La Loge (made from pinot blanc), Bochot (made from pinot meunier) and les Grandes Côtes (made from pinot noir). All of the soleras for these four wines were started in 2011, with the exception of the Bochot parcel, which was only planted in 2010, so that its solera of reserve wines was not started until the 2016 vintage. Each bottling is comprised of fifty percent of its base year of 2017, with the other half of the blend hailing from each cuvée's solera. All of the four single vineyard wines are on pure Kimmeridgian limestone (like the grand crus in Chablis), with the exception of the les Grandes Côtes, as the pinot noir vines here are planted across the three soil types that meet in this vineyard: upper Kimmeridgian, middle Kimmeridgian and Portlandian limestone, making for a wine that is akin to "pinot noir going on a tour of Chablis' various soil types". Aurélien Gerbais has also reduced how much SO2 he uses for these wines (though he has not eliminated it, thankfully). Monsieur Gerbais also has a fifth single vineyard bottling, which is a Rosé de Saignée cuvée from the Beauregard vineyard, which is also planted entirely to pinot noir.

For these new *parcellaire* bottlings, Aurélien Gerbais is allowing all of the *vins clairs* to go through complete malolactic fermentation and then aging the wines in Burgundy barrels for nine months prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation. This is a practice similar to what well-established small producers such as Benoît Marguet and Aurélien Suenen do for their *vins clairs* as well. The first releases were aged just a touch under three years *sur latte* and all five were finished with a low, Extra Brut *dosage* of three grams per liter. They are certainly the finest wines I have yet had the pleasure to taste from Monsieur Gerbais and one can only assume that these wines will only get more complex as the soleras continue to age! He has continued to produce both of his blended "Grains de Celles" Extra Brut bottlings as well, made from fruit from a varied mosaic of both varietal and vineyard sources, but he has also revamped these two cuvées as well, as beginning with the new releases, these wines are now all from a single vintage- in this case from 2018. All of the new releases that I tasted from Aurélien Gerbais are an exciting step up in quality from what I had previously tried from the domaine and are very much worth taking the time to single out in this report. I cannot recommend them highly enough.

A new producer to me also featured in this report is Étienne Calsac in the village of Avize. His American importer very kindly sent me the entire roster of Monsieur Calsac's new releases just before I left for Burgundy at the end of November and I was extremely impressed with all of his wines. Monsieur Calsac took over the family vineyards from his grandparents in 2010- at the tender age of twenty-six, the production from which had all been sold previously to some of the *Grandes Marques*. He is making truly beautiful, classic examples of Côte des Blancs Champagne, with excellent mineral drive, lovely purity of fruit tones, elegant *mousse* and fine structural chassis for long-term aging. After having not tasted any of Étienne's wine prior to my

trip to Burgundy, I was very impressed to walk into my favorite wine shop in Beaune a couple of weeks later (where there is a stellar roster of top grower Champagne available) and spot Monsieur Calsac's wines prominently displayed there. To give some idea about how much I respect the Champagne section of this wine shop's inventory, this is the store where I have often bought wines from producers such as Marie-Noëlle Ledru, Benoît Tarlant, Sébastien Mouzon, Jean-Marc Sélèque, Raphaël Bérêche and Aurélien Suenen, so they clearly know what they are doing in the region of Champagne! Monsieur Calsac organically farms 2.8 hectares of vines (though he is not yet certified organic), with many of them in top Côte des Blancs village of Avize, but he also has parcels in other villages here such as Bisseuil and Grauves, as well as in towns in the start of the Vallée de la Marne.

Like so many of the top young producers in Champagne today, Monsieur Calsac allows his *vins clairs* to age in either cask or tank for seven months prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation (with some wines, such as his single vineyard Clos des Maladries, the *vins clairs* are aged in a combination of the two). His bottlings all spend at least two years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement and are typically finished with quite low levels of *dosage*. He has created dedicated soleras of reserve wines for a couple of his non-vintage cuvées, including the "L'échappée Belle" Blanc des Blancs and the Les Rocheforts single vineyard wine. The crown jewel in Monsieur Calsac's lineup is the tiny sixteen *ares* single vineyard bottling of Clos des Maladries. This small *monopole* vineyard sits right behind Étienne's grandparents' house in Avize and was planted by his grandfather in the very early 1970s. Étienne plows it by horse and produces a vintage-dated bottling here each year. The Clos des Maladries is a warm microclimate, and this is further enhanced by its small expanse being walled in by heat-retaining stone walls, so this wine is usually of sufficient ripeness that Monsieur Calsac chooses to bottle it non-*dosé*. Étienne Calsac also produces another Brut Nature bottling, this one non-vintage, which he calls "Les Revenants". This is a wine he produces from a fallow plot in Avize which he planted once he took over the family vineyards in 2010, but with a very different *cépages* of fifty percent Pinot Blanc, forty-three percent Petit Meslier and seven percent Arbane! The cuvée's name of "Les Revenants" translates as "the Forgotten" and alludes to these now quite rare grapes in the vineyard firmament of Champagne, which were once quite widely-planted in the region.

Beyond the wines from Messieurs Gerbais and Calsac, this short piece on Champagne and Sparkling Wines also includes several important new releases from Benoît Marguet and Aurélien Suenen, which arrived here in the US just before my trip to Burgundy and were all awaiting me upon my return to help the palate's recovery after a pretty immersive tasting trip in the Côte d'Or and Chablis. The new releases include Monsieur Suenen's non-vintage bottlings of Blanc de Blancs- "C+C" from his Cramant and Chouilly vineyards and his "Oiry" bottling from that village, both from the base year of 2018. As all of Aurélien Suenen's wines are made in fairly small quantities, I often miss tasting these wines upon release, as they often come and go in the market before I have a chance to taste them! So, you can see that my strategy of expanding Champagne coverage and doing some smaller reports has already born fruit! From Benoît Marguet I was delighted to have a chance to cover five of his new vintage-dated releases from the 2016 vintage, including his Blanc de Blanc bottlings made from purchased fruit from the villages of Oiry and a blended cuvée made from grapes grown in Avize and Cramant. Both of these bottlings are made from producers who farm organically (as Benoît Marguet will not craft any of his wines from fruit that is not grown in this manner) and are made with his customary

precision, with extended aging of the barrel-fermented *vins clairs*, no added SO₂ during the *elevage* and bottling without any *dosage*.

These two Champagne Marguet 2016s were augmented in this round of samples by three of his superb single vineyard wines from the same year: Les Beurys, Les Saint Rémys and Les Crayères. All three of these *lieux à dits* lie in Benoît's home village of Ambonnay, with the Les Beurys composed of a blend of pinot noir and chardonnay, the Les Saint Rémys a Blanc de Noirs bottling based solely on pinot noir and the Les Crayères being crafted entirely from chardonnay in 2016. The vineyard of Les Saint Rémys lies mid-slope, right in the heart of the Ambonnay *vignobles*, and not too far east of the boundary with Bouzy. Les Beurys is up at the very top of the slope in Ambonnay and all the way over on the other side of the commune, right near the border with Trépail. Les Crayères, the most famous of the three parcels, is lower down in altitude, equidistant between the village center of Ambonnay and the Trépail boundary. As the name implies, Les Crayères is a particularly profound limestone *terroir*. One of Monsieur Marguet's well-known neighbors in the village, Egly-Ouriet, also produces a non-vintage Blanc de Noirs bottling solely from the vineyard of Les Crayères. I had never previously had an opportunity to compare and contrast so many finished versions of these vintage-dated bottlings, as I usually taste the Marguet wines made from purchased fruit at different times of the year from the single vineyard bottlings, except of course when visiting the domaine in Ambonnay. I had anticipated having a slight preference for the single vineyard bottlings from the Marguet family's own vines in Ambonnay (as these are clearly some of Champagne's greatest wines), but this did not prove to be the case, as all five wines were simply stunning.

As I mentioned in my historical feature on Benoît Marguet and his beautiful wines back in Issue Fifty-Eight, I have nothing but admiration for the changes that he has crafted here at this ten hectare domaine since 2009. Farming biodynamically, barrel-fermenting all of his *vins clairs*, utilizing solely indigenous yeasts, giving the still wines longer *elevage* in the cellars, expanding the roster of single vineyard bottlings from the family's own vineyards, as well as searching out organically-farmed fruit to purchase to make additional bottlings such as his "Avize-Cramant" and Oiry vintage-dated cuvées have all been extremely positive changes that he has introduced here, and his wines are now among the very finest produced anywhere in the dynamic region of Champagne. However, Monsieur Marguet is an absolute purist when it comes to how he farms, makes his wines and how he lives his life in general and there are a few aspects of his ever-evolving philosophy of winegrowing that I would love to see change a bit. His wines are now almost exclusively non-*dosé*, which I think is perfectly fine for bottlings such as his superb single vineyard wines that one would anticipate wanting to tuck away in the cellar for several years before drinking, so that the brisk foundation of acidity in these wines can relax a bit with the passage of time. However, conversely, Monsieur Marguet has almost entirely eschewed the use of SO₂ during his winemaking process these days as well, so not only are these wines without any buffering *dosage* to ameliorate some of the sharp edges from their excellent spines of acidity, but they are now also essentially non-sulfur wines, and I really do wonder how long they will be able to keep for those of us who like to truly age our Champagne.

The two philosophical precepts do seem to be a bit intellectually incompatible to me, and I would love to see a bit of flexibility with one or the other, just to safeguard that these stunningly beautiful wines can be drunk at the peak of pleasure without possible compromise. I

would be completely content to drink a wine such as the brilliant 2016 Les Beurys today, if it had four or five grams of balancing *dosage* to buffer its brisk acids of youth, or tuck it away for a decade in the cellar as a non-*dosé* wine and let its girdle of acidity relax with bottle age, if it were given a modicum of sulfur dioxide along the way to help safeguard its stability for those ten years. I have to imagine that bottles that Benoît retains in his own cellar and which never move, will age quite gracefully in their current guise, but how will those bottles that he sends out into the world to face the vagaries of shipping and storage in wine shops and restaurants fare over that same decade? I know that at least his importers here in the New York area are absolute sticklers for handling their shipments to perfection, but is this also true for all of Monsieur Marguet's distributors around the globe? And having worked many years as both a merchant and sommelier, I know only too well all of the challenges to handling wines perfectly in those commercial environments, often where space is at an absolute premium, brutal rents often make cutting costs elsewhere a prerequisite for financial survival (and proper temperature control for wines is often seen by proprietors as an attractive target for savings) and all too often great wines are left to the vagaries of the back of delivery trucks in the heat of summer. So, here is my plea to Monsieur Marguet to perhaps reflect upon some of these current precepts, just to ensure that every single bottle of a wine such as the life-changing 2016 Les Crayères can be drunk at its absolute apogee without any fears of the cellar methods shortening or compromising that journey of wonder in the bottle.



Non-Champagne Sparkling Wines

2018 Bruno Bienaimé “la Bulle d’Amélie” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature (Jura)

As readers may recall from my article on the wines of the Jura last summer, Bruno Bienaimé started his domaine in the region only five years or so ago, after having spent a decade working alongside Vincent Laval at his winery in Cumières. So, it was inevitable that Monsieur Bienaimé, a native *Champenois*, would eventually release a sparkling wine. His 2018 Blanc de Blancs is his debut sparkler, made entirely from chardonnay I believe and offering up a beautifully refined bouquet of apple, nectarine, macadamia nut, a lovely base of white soil tones, orange zest and a discreet framing of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and snappy, with a lovely core and soil signature, pinpoint bubbles and fine focus and grip on the long and classy finish. This is a lovely bottle of bubbly that I would like to tuck away in the cellar for three to five years and see how it evolves, as my gut instinct is that it will age beautifully. 2022-2035? **90.**

Non-Vintage Champagne Brut Nature

Étienne Calsac “Les Revenants” Brut Nature NV (Avize)

Étienne Calsac Les Revenants bottlings is his Brut Nature cuvée, but with a twist, as the *cépages* of this wine is fifty percent Pinot Blanc, forty-three percent Petit Meslier and seven percent Arbane! Étienne planted these vines in one of his Avize vineyards in 2010, so the 2016 base year was his first release of this bottling. This is the 2018 base year, with the *vins clairs* aged seven months in cask prior to bottling up and aging under cork. The wine offers up a beautifully refined nose of apple, pear, *patissière*, macadamia nut, lovely soil tones and a gently floral topnote that recalls pinot meunier. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and really exquisitely balanced for a Brut Nature bottling from 2018, with a lovely core, fine soil signature, elegant *mousse* and a long, crisp and complex finish. This is very, very good! 2022-2035. **92.**

Non-Vintage Champagne Blanc de Blancs Brut and Extra Brut

Étienne Calsac “L’échappée Belle” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Avize)

The new release of Étienne Calsac’s “L’échappée Belle” Blanc des Blancs is from the base year of 2018. Monsieur Calsac allows his *vins clairs* to go through complete malolactic and ages them for seven months prior to bottling up, with thirty percent reserve wines, for secondary fermentation. The wine was disgorged in March of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. The bouquet is bright and generous, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, fresh almond, a touch of lemon zest, brioche, chalky soil tones and a lovely topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is focused, complex and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, refined *mousse* and a long, poised and snappy finish. Though Étienne is based in Avize, the fruit for this bottling hails primarily from the premier cru villages of Grauves and Bisseuil. This is a lovely bottle of Blanc de Blancs. 2022-2040+. **91+.**

Étienne Calsac “les Rocheforts” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Avize)

Étienne Calsac’s “les Rocheforts” bottling is a single vineyard wine from the eponymous *lieu à dit* in the village of Bisseuil in the Vallée de la Marne. Like the above wine, this release is from the base year of 2018, with the *vins clairs* having gone through malo and fifty percent raised in older oak casks prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation. It was disgorged in March of 2021 and given a finishing *dosage* of two grams per liter. The wine delivers lovely aromatics in its blend of golden delicious apple, white peach, a complex base of gently chalky soil tones, a touch of vanillin oak, almond paste and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the

wine is bright, full-bodied and snappy, with a lovely core, good soil undertow, elegant *mousse* and a long, vibrant and complex finish. This is very nicely balanced and is already quite tasty in its youthful guise, but clearly there is more to unlock here with just a bit of bottle age. Fine juice. 2022-2040+. 92.

Étienne Calsac “Projet Comète No. 1” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature (Avize)

The Projet Comète series from Étienne Calsac is a small lot project that is designed to be “one-offs” that will only be done as opportunity allows and are not planned to ever be repeated. This particular bottling is from the 2018 vintage, made from three different parcels of chardonnay that combine to produce a single cask of *vin clair*. The wine is aged under cork during its secondary fermentation and bottled without *dosage*. The bouquet is lovely, offering up scents of pear, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, a touch of *crème patissière*, brioche and a delicate foundation of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and youthfully snappy, with a lovely core of fruit, fine Côte des Blancs minerality, elegant *mousse* and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Fans of non-*dosé* Champagne will be happy to drink this now; for others, a few years in the cellar to let it soften up its acids a bit more will pay dividends. Fine juice. 2022-2040. 92.

Pierre Gerbais “Champ Viole” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

Aurélien Gerbais has just launched this range of new, single parcel bottlings, all based on a series of soleras he has begun for each wine. The new releases all hail from the base year of 2017, with the perpetual reserve cuvées having been started several years before and added to the base year. Each bottling is also a single *cépages*, with the Champ Viole parcel being planted to chardonnay and the solera for this bottling started in 2011. The *vins clairs* for this wine were aged in cask until June of 2018, half of the bottling is comprised of perpetual reserve wine and the new release was disgorged in April of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. It delivers a splendid nose of pear, delicious apple, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, fresh-baked bread and just a touch of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and zesty, with a full-bodied format, a rock solid core of fruit, outstanding mineral drive and cut, snappy acids, pinpoint bubbles and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This could do with a year or two in the cellar to let its acids relax a bit more, but in a pinch, it is already pretty tasty! A fine new range from Monsieur Gerbais! 2024-2045. 92.

Pierre Gerbais “La Loge” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

The La Loge single parcel bottling is entirely made from Pinot Blanc Vrai, with its base year again 2017 and the wine bottled up for secondary fermentation in June of 2018. Like the Champ Viole, the perpetual reserve solera for this vineyard was started in 2011. These vines are fully eighty years of age! It was disgorged in April of 2021 after nearly three years aging *sur latte*, and was finished with a *dosage* again of three grams per liter. The bouquet is beautiful on this bottling, delivering scents of white peach, apple, brioche, fruit blossoms, limestone minerality and a nice, discreet touch of vanillin oak. The wine is full-bodied, focused and quite youthful still on the palate, with good depth at the core, frothy *mousse*, snappy acids and lovely focus and cut on the long, very promising finish. Aromatically, this bottling is already beautifully expressive, but it is still a bit too youthful on the palate for my tastes and really deserves a bit of bottle age to soften up and blossom properly. It will be delicious in due course. 2025-2045+. 91+.

Huré Frères “Inattendue” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Ludes)

The current release of Huré Frères “Inattendue” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut is from the base year of 2016. The wine hails from chardonnay parcels owned by the family in their home

village of Ludes and in Rilly-la-Montagne. About half of the *vins clairs* are barrel fermented and the wine was disgorged in March of 2021 after four years aging *sur latte* and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. It offers up a refined bouquet of delicious apple, pear, fresh almond, brioche, a fine base of soil tones and just a hint of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine girdle of acidity, a lovely core, impressive mineral drive, pinpoint bubbles and a long, very well-balanced and still fairly youthful finish. This is already tasty, but two or three years in the cellar will really let it blossom completely. Fine juice. 2022-2040. **91+**.

Aurélien Suenen “C+C” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Cramant)

The new release of Aurélien Suenen’s non-vintage bottling from his parcels in Cramant and Chouilly is from the base year of 2018. The *vins clairs* are barrel-fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged nine months in cask or *foudre* prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation. The wine was given three-plus years aging *sur latte* and disgorged in October of 2021; the finishing *dosage* this year was four grams per liter. The wine offers up a beautifully refined nose of golden delicious apple, pear, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, chalky minerality, fresh almond, brioche and a delicate topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and youthful, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and grip, impeccable *mousse* and a long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is certainly approachable today, but still very much a young wine and I would not hesitate to tuck it away in the cellar for five to seven years before drinking it, just to allow it to completely blossom. It is a beautifully made wine with excellent potential. 2027-2050+. **93+**.

Aurélien Suenen “Oiry” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut NV (Cramant)

Aurélien Suenen’s “Oiry” Blanc de Blancs is another beautiful grand cru bottling, with the new release again hailing from the base year of 2018. Monsieur Suenen’s vines in this village are forty-five years of age. It was aged for a bit more than three years on its fine lees and disgorged in October of 2021, with the *dosage* to finish this wine a touch lower than the more brisk “C+C” cuvée, as this wine received three grams per liter. The complex bouquet here is beautifully precise out of the blocks, delivering scents of white peach, apple, just a touch of hazelnut, a lovely base of limestone, just a whisper of oak, warm bread, citrus peel, discreet smokiness and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and fairly tensile, with a good core, elegant *mousse*, fine focus and grip and a long, mineral-driven and racy finish. Like the “C+C”, the Oiry is a wine built for the cellar and really needs five or six years in the cellar to truly blossom and start to drink with generosity. It has excellent potential and it would truly be a shame to not give it the time in the cellar it needs to drink with generosity. Great juice. 2027-2050+. **93+**.

Non-Vintage Champagne Brut and Extra Brut

Bérêche et Fils “Brut Réserve” Vieilles Vignes Brut NV (Ludes)

The new release of Brut Réserve from Raphaël and Vincent Bérêche is from the base year of 2018 and was disgorged in October of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of six grams per liter. As is customary with this bottling, its *cépages* is one-third each of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier and a third of the cuvée is comprised from reserve wines. The wine is still youthful, but offers lovely depth in its nose of apple, pear, fresh-baked bread, a complex base of soil tones, dried flowers and a hint of buttery oak in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and full-bodied, with fine depth at the core, good soil signature, elegant *mousse* and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is quite tasty in its youth, but this bottling

has a history or aging splendidly and it would not be a crime to tuck a case away in the cellar for three to five years before starting to drink it in earnest. Fine juice. 2022-2045. **92.**

Pierre Gerbais “Grains de Celles” W18 Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

The Pierre Gerbais “Grains de Celles” W18 non-vintage Extra Brut is composed from a *cépages* of fifty percent pinot noir and twenty-five percent each of chardonnay and pinot blanc. The wine is from the base year of 2018 and was disgorged in March of 2021, after two years aging on its fine lees, includes about five percent reserve wines and was finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. This is classic Aube Champagne, with the Kimmeridgian limestone of the soils here front and center on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of apple, white peach, chalky minerality, fresh-baked bread and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full and snappy, with a fine core, excellent mineral undertow, lovely *mousse* and a long, well-balanced and complex finish. This new release of the Grains de Celles is certainly tasty today, but it still youthful and has plenty of acidity, so some time in the cellar to let these relax a bit it will only allow it get even better. Think of this wine as drinking Chablis with bubbles! 2022-2040. **91.**



Pierre Gerbais “Bochot” Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

This is another of Aurélien Gerbais’ series of single vineyard, perpetual cuvée bottlings, of which Bochot is a parcel planted entirely to pinot meunier. However, this wine is a bit younger in its evolution in the single parcel program, as the vines here were only planted in

2010, so 2016 was the first year where Aurélien felt the fruit was ready to start the solera for the wine, so this current release is from the base year of 2017, with its fifty percent solera in the blend only from the previous year. Like all of the other wines in the series, it was bottled up for secondary fermentation in June of 2018, disgorged in April of 2021 and given three grams per liter of *dosage*. It offers up a bright and complex bouquet of nectarine, brioche, a potpourri of meunier floral tones, limestone minerality and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a lovely core, excellent mineral drive and cut, frothy *mousse* and a long, beautifully balanced and complex finish. This is first class juice! 2022-2045. **92+**.

Pierre Gerbais “les Grandes Côtes” Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

The les Grandes Côtes bottling from Champagne Gerbais is based entirely on pinot noir from this vineyard, and again, has its own perpetual cuvée of reserve wines (started in 2011) and the first release is based on the 2017 harvest. Like all of the others, it was bottled up for secondary fermentation in June of 2018, fifty percent of the blend is from the solera; the wine was disgorged in April of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. The bouquet is very refined out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, white peach, *patissière*, beautiful chalky minerality, a touch of buttery oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with impeccable balance, elegant *mousse* and lovely backend minerality and grip on the long, refined and complex finish. This is my favorite of the single vineyard bottlings today, but this could change as each of them settles in with some bottle age. Fine, fine juice. 2022-2045. **93**.

Huré Frères “Memoire” Extra Brut NV (Ludes)

François Huré’s Memoire bottling is comprised from a *cépages* of forty-five percent each of pinot noir and pinot meunier, augmented by ten percent chardonnay. This is his solera bottling, which was started in 1982 and this bottling includes the juice from the 2017 vintage in its blend. The *vins clairs* are all aged in *foudre* prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation, with the wine disgorged in June of 2021 and finished with its customary *dosage* of two grams per liter. It offers up a beautifully refined bouquet that reflects all of the older wines from the solera in its blend of apple, nectarine, warm brioche, hazelnut, a lovely base of Montagne de Reims soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with a fine core, excellent soil undertow, zesty acids, refined *mousse* and a long, complex finish. This is a lovely example of what is a top flight cuvée, year in and year out. 2022-2045. **92**.

Champagne Tarlant “But Réserve” NV (Oeuilly)

The new release of Benoît and Mélanie Tarlant’s non-vintage Brut Réserve is from the base year of 2013. It is composed of its customary *cépages* of one-third each of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier, with the *vins clairs* aged in cask until May of 2014 before they were bottled up for secondary fermentation. The wine includes a significant percentage of reserve wines in the blend and was disgorged in February of 2020, with nearly six years aging *sur latte* and was finished with a *dosage* of five grams per liter. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, pear, almond, brioche, a lovely base of soil tones, a touch of buttery oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully complex, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, vibrant acids, elegant *mousse* and a long, bouncy and quite classy finish. Because of the long time spent on its fine lees, this has the complexity of a wine of maturity. 2022-2040+. **91+**.

Non-Vintage Champagne Brut and Extra Brut Rosé

Étienne Calsac “Rosé de Craie” Extra Brut NV (Avize)

Étienne Calsac’s “Rosé de Craie” non-vintage Extra Brut is composed from a *cépages* of ninety percent chardonnay and ten percent pinot noir, with the new release hailing from the base year of 2018. The *vins clairs* are again aged seven months prior to bottling up for a second fermentation, and with this cuvée, fifteen percent are aged in older casks purchased from Raphaël Bérèche. The wine was disgorged in January of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of four grams per liter. It is a beautiful salmon color and delivers a refined bouquet of strawberries, pomegranate, chalky minerality, just a touch of wheat toast and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied, focused and still fairly youthful, with fine balance and backend bounce. It has a good core, lovely mineral drive and frothy *mousse*, with fine length and blossoming complexity on the finish. Good juice that could still do with a year or two in the cellar. 2022-2040. **90.**

Pierre Gerbais “Grains de Celles” W18 Extra Brut Rosé NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

Aurélien Gerbais’ Grains de Celles” Extra Brut Rosé is made from the same *cépages* as the non-Rosé bottling, but with ten percent of the pinot noir portion here being still red wine, which gives it a beautiful salmon color. It is from the base year of 2018 and was disgorged in April of 2021, with a finishing *dosage* of three grams per liter. The bouquet is lovely, delivering scents of strawberries, blood orange, that beautiful limestone minerality, rye bread and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core, pinpoint bubbles, lovey focus and grip and very impressive mineral drive on the backend. Fine juice. 2022-2040. **91.**

Pierre Gerbais “Beauregard” Extra Brut NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

The Beauregard single vineyard bottling is an Extra Brut Rosé again based on a perpetual cuvée Monsieur Gerbais has started for this wine. Like its compatriots in the single vineyard lineup, it is from the base year of 2017 and was given cask aging until June of 2018 and disgorged in April of 2021. The wine is a lovely, relatively deep salmon color and offers up a beautiful, vinous bouquet of cherries, rhubarb, a gentle touch of cinnamon, rye bread, limestone minerality, orange peel and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and well-balanced, with a fine core, nice, broad shoulders from the addition of still pinot noir, a good base of soil tones, frothy *mousse* and a fairly long, complex finish. This is definitely built to accompany a meal, with its nicely vinous personality, but is the only cuvée from his new lineup of single parcel bottlings where I actually have a very slight preference for the more flexible style of Grains des Celles blended bottling of Rosé, which is decidedly less vinous in personality. Good juice. 2022-2045. **90.**

Vintage-Dated Champagne Blanc de Blancs

2017 Étienne Calsac “Clos des Maladries” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature (Avize)

The Clos des Maladries is a small, sixteen *ares* monopole in Avize for Étienne Calsac, with the vines here planted by Étienne’s grandfather in the early 1970s and now closing in on fifty years of age. Étienne farms them organically and plows this parcel by horse. One-third of the *vins clairs* are aged in three hundred and fifty liter, old oak casks, with the wine bottled up for secondary fermentation after seven months of *elevage* in the cellars. The 2017 is non-*dosé*. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of pear, a touch of passion fruit, brioche, fresh almond, a beautifully complex base of chalky soil tones, the first hints of *crème patissière*, acacia blossoms and just a dollop of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied,

focused and rock solid at the core, with excellent complexity, well-integrated acids, refined *mousse* and a long, balanced and very sophisticated finish. I really like the balance of the 2017 Clos des Maladries. 2022-2050. **93+**.



2016 Étienne Calsac “Clos des Maladries” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature (Avize)

The 2016 “Clos des Maladries” from Étienne Calsac was disgorged in January of 2021, after aging *sur latte* for just under four years. Thirty-five percent of the *vins clairs* are raised in cask for this wine and all go through malolactic fermentation. The nose on the 2016 is lovely, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, almond, *crème patissière*, a fine base of limestone minerality, white flowers and just a touch of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and zesty, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow, refined *mousse* and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is a lovely bottle where the lack of *dosage* is handled beautifully, with the acids buried in the fruit and minerality and the wine already drinking quite nicely at five years of age. 2022-2045+. **93**.

2016 Marguet “Avize et Cramant” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

Benoît Marguet’s 2016 Avize and Cramant bottling is a bit more tightly-knit out of the blocks than his Oiry Blanc de Blancs, as one would expect from these two grand cru communes which tend to make some of the most structured and minerally-defined wines in all of the Côte des Blancs. However, with sufficient bottle age, this is going to be a stellar bottle. The bouquet is bright and very promising, offering up scents of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, chalky minerality, warm bread, a touch of nuttiness and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine

is deep, snappy and full, with a rock solid core of fruit, exceptional mineral drive and cut, refined *mousse* and a long, youthfully complex and very nicely balanced finish. Whereas Monsieur Marguet's 2016 Oiry bottling is already pretty tasty (albeit still in climbing mode), the Avize and Cramant cuvée is more bound up in its structure today and I would let it slumber in the cellar for a handful of years before opening. It will be outstanding in due course and every bit worth the short wait! 2026-2055+. **94.**

2016 Marguet “Oiry” Blanc de Blancs Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

Benoît Marguet's 2016 bottling from the Côte des Blancs village of Oiry was disgorged in March of 2021 and is non-*dosé*. Like all of Monsieur Marguet's wines these days, the *vins clairs* are barrel-fermented and given fully nine months aging in cask prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation in July of 2017. The wine has a very nice touch of buttery oakiness to it on both the nose and palate, which is beautifully integrated with its other components and makes for an extremely attractive package. The nose wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, a touch of brioche and a very stylish framing of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and classy, with a superb core of fruit, elegant *mousse*, fine soil undertow, brisk, well-integrated acids and excellent length and grip on the complex finish. Even though this bottling has no *dosage*, it is so well-balanced that it already pretty tasty, though for my palate, I would tuck it away in the cellar for another five years and really let it blossom. Fine juice. 2022-2050. **94.**

2014 Aurélien Suenen “Le Mont-Aigu” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Millésime (Cramant)

The single vineyard of Le Mont-Aigu is located in the village of Chouilly and 2013 was the first vintage that was ever produced of this bottling by Aurélien Suenen. This *lieu à dit* is one of the warmest in the village of Chouilly, which works beautifully in the nicely structured and racy vintage of 2014. At the outset of its eighth year, this is still a fairly young wine and there is still room for greater complexity and generosity with further bottle age. The bouquet is already superb, wafting from the glass in a blossoming blend of white peach, apple, chalky minerality, fresh-baked bread, dried flowers and just a hint of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, elegant *mousse* and a very long, focused and mineral-driven finish. The *vins clairs* for this bottling were raised in *foudres* from the Austrian *tonnelier* Stockinger, and initially Monsieur Suenen was not overly happy with this wine, as he felt the oak was too prominent in the wine from the fairly new *foudres*. However, this has receded nicely with bottle age and now the oak influence is very discreet and adds just a certain touch to the overall impression of the wine, and I have little doubt that this will further fade with more bottle age. This is an outstanding single vineyard bottling of Blanc de Blancs that I would still prefer to give a few more years' worth of bottle age before drinking in earnest, as this wine is still expanding its constellation of complexity and palate generosity. 2026-2060+. **95.**

Vintage-Dated Champagne Brut and Extra Brut

2016 Champagne Marguet “les Beurys” Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

The *cépages* of the 2016 vintage of Benoît Marguet's single vineyard bottling of les Beurys is seventy-one percent chardonnay and twenty-nine percent pinot noir. Like all of the wines in this series, the *vins clairs* are aged in older casks for nine months prior to bottling for secondary fermentation, go through full malo and the wine was aged just under four years *sur latte* prior to its disgorgement in April of 2021. The wine delivers a lovely aromatic constellation

of nectarine, apple, hazelnut, brioche, chalky minerality, dried flowers, gentle smokiness and a lovely foundation of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with very elegant *mousse*, laser-like focus, beautiful balance and grip and a very long, youthfully complex and snappy finish. This has more youthful snap to its personality than the one hundred percent pinot noir-based cuvée of les Saints Rémys, and so I would certainly be inclined to not touch a bottle of this for a handful of years and let brisker acids from the chardonnay component in the wine soften up a bit more before having at the wine in earnest. It is truly a brilliant young wine and will be absolutely stunning once it has relaxed a bit structurally! 2027-2060. **95.**

2016 Champagne Marguet “Les Crayères” Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

The 2016 vintage of Les Crayères from Benoît Marguet is made solely from chardonnay, but as it is not labeled as a Blanc de Blancs, I have listed it here, rather than in the Blanc de Blancs section. Like these other single vineyard bottlings reviewed in this article, the *vins clairs* were aged until the end of July of 2017 prior to bottling up for their secondary fermentation, and the wine was disgorged in April of 2021. It offers up a beautifully refined and complex bouquet of lemon, pear, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, a profound base of limestone minerality, orange blossoms and a lovely touch of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, complex and tensile, with a beautiful core of fruit, supremely elegant *mousse*, great mineral complexity and drive, brisk acids and laser-like focus on the very long, well-balanced and youthful finish. To my palate, this beautiful wine needs five years in the cellar to let its acidity relax a bit and allow the wine to truly drink with generosity, but I am sure that there are plenty of Brut Nature fanciers out there who would not hesitate to drink it with great pleasure today. It is a brilliant young wine. 2027-2060. **95+.**

2016 Champagne Marguet “les Saints Rémys” Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

The single vineyard les Saint Rémys bottling from Benoît Marguet is composed entirely from pinot noir. The *vins clairs* were aged in cask until the end of July of 2017 prior to bottling up for secondary fermentation and the wine was disgorged in May of 2021. It offers up a truly superb bouquet of white peach, apple, macadamia nut, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, *patissière*, dried flowers and just a hint of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow and focus, very elegant *mousse* and a long, beautifully balanced and youthful finish. As this is non-*dosé*, it will really deserve at least a few years in the cellar for most tasters, just to let its fine girdle of acidity relax a bit. For those who love non-*dosé* wines and do not mind a bit of structural austerity out of the blocks, it will already be an immensely satisfying drink. For my palate, I would much prefer to let it blossom with at least five years in the cellar. 2027-2060. **95.**

2014 Huré Frères “Instantanée” Blanc de Noirs Extra Brut Millésime (Ludes)

The 2014 Huré Frères “Instantanée” Blanc de Noirs is a blend of pinot noir and pinot meunier this year, with it having spent six years aging *sur latte* prior to being disgorged in January of 2021 and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. The bouquet is bright and complex, jumping from the glass in a vibrant mix of white peach, apple, warm bread, a complex base of soil tones, plenty of upper register smokiness and just a hint of nutskin. On the palate the wine is young, full-bodied and complex, with a fine core, lovely backend mineral drive, pinpoint bubbles and a long, brisk and promising finish. To my palate, I would love to tuck this fine bottle away for another few years and let its acids relax a bit more before I started drinking it in earnest. It has fine potential. 2025-2055. **92.**



2012 Gosset “Grande Millésime” Brut (Épernay)

The 2012 Gosset “Grande Millésime” is composed from a *cépages* of sixty-seven percent chardonnay and thirty-three percent pinot noir. As I mentioned a year ago, when I last reported on the wine, it was given a bit over six years aging on its fine lees and finished with a *dosage* of eight grams per liter. The wine has started to stir nicely since last Christmas, and today offers up a deep and complex nose of apple, pear, a complex foundation of chalky minerality, warm bread, white flowers and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, impressive backend mineral drive, very refined *mousse*, lovely focus and balance and a long, complex and zesty finish. This is a lovely drink today, but still has plenty of room to grow with bottle age and I would be inclined to let this wine have at least another five or six years in the cellar, just to let more layers of complexity unfold. A beautiful wine. 2022-2060. **94.**

2009 Georges Laval “les Hautes Chèvres” Brut Nature Millésime (Cumières)

The 2009 vintage of les Hautes Chèvres is a very important vintage for Vincent Laval, as this was the last that this wine was made from the very old pinot noir vines in this *lieu à dit* in Cumières, for after 2009, Vincent had to grub up these vines and from 2010 forwards, this wine has made from old vine pinot meunier in the same vineyard. At twelve years of age, the 2009 les Hautes Chèvres is drinking splendidly, offering up a wide open and very complex bouquet of nectarine, apple, *patissière*, hazelnuts, a beautifully complex base of chalky soil tones, orange peel and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely into its apogee of peak drinkability, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb mineral undertow, very refined *mousse* and a long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. The 2009 les Hautes Chèvres still has decades of life ahead of it, but it is now drinking gorgeously. 2022-250. **96.**

2008 Marie-Noëlle Ledru Brut Nature Millésime (Ambonnay)

I had not drunk a bottle of the 2008 Brut Nature from Madame Ledru since the fall of 2017, and the passing four years have allowed it to blossom nicely and the wine is now starting to drink with a large degree of generosity to go along with its realized early promise. The *cépages* here is eighty-five percent pinot noir and fifteen percent chardonnay and the wine was aged six years *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. The 2008 is just starting to hit its stride today, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of apple, hints of nectarine, a beautiful base of Ambonnay minerality, dried flowers, caraway seed, *patissière*, just a whisper of macadamia nut and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and now quite wide open on the attack, with a lovely core, elegant *mousse* and impeccable focus and balance on the long, complex and vibrant finish. There is still plenty of room for further growth in complexity in this wine, but it is now entering into its plateau and is drinking very nicely today. 2022-2050. **94+.**

2000 Ployez-Jacquemart “Liesse d’Harbonville” Brut Millésime (Ludes)

The 2000 vintage of the Ployez family’s *Tête de Cuvée*, the Liesse d’Harbonville, is drinking beautifully at age twenty-one. The *cépages* is two-thirds chardonnay and the balance split evenly between pinot noir and pinot meunier, with the *vins clairs* all barrel-fermented, but not undergoing malolactic. The bouquet offers up a deep and complex constellation of baked peach and apple, hazelnut, warm rye bread, a lovely base of soil tones, a touch of buttery oak, plenty of upper register smokiness and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and entering its plateau of peak maturity, with excellent mid-palate depth, refined *mousse*, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This wine has notable weight and depth on the palate and still has plenty of life ahead of it, but it is drinking very well indeed at the present time and it is hard to imagine it getting any better than it is today. 2022-2045. **95.**

Vintage-Dated Champagne Brut and Extra Brut Rosé

2006 Pol Roger Brut Millésime Rosé (Épernay)

It is funny that I had not tasted a bottle of the 2006 Pol Roger Brut Millésime Rosé since Christmas two years ago, as I was down to a single bottle out of my original case. When I first opened this bottle and tasted a glass with the *hors d’oeuvres* it had evolved into a bit too vinous of a style for my palate and I had the distinct impression that it had been better previously. However, when I drank the next glass with the salmon I had prepared for a first course, the wine began to shine and was every bit as enjoyable as it had been in its slightly less evolved state back in 2020. So, it has clearly moved into its more mature phase where it is best served as a dinner companion, as in this context it still tastes delicious. The bouquet offers up scents of desiccated cherries, orange peel, plenty of smokiness, a fine base of soil, caraway seed, dried rose petals and a touch of brown spice. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and notably vinous on the attack, with a good core and soil undertow, bright acids, pinpoint bubbles and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. I have enjoyed each and every bottle out of this case, but I am happy that I drank through eleven of them when the wine was still in its first phase of evolution, where it was equally at home as an *aperitif* or at the table. 2022-2030+. **93.**

**MORE RECENT VINTAGES OF IL CARNASCIALE'S
BEAUTIFUL IL CABERLOT IGT**



I was fortunate two issues back, during my coverage on recent releases from Italy, to be able to report on a vertical tasting of the rare Super Tuscan bottling of Il Caberlot from the Podere Il Carnasciale winery. Podere Il Carnasciale was founded in 1988 by Wolf and Bettina Rogosky, when they planted a tiny hilltop vineyard in southern Chianti with the extremely rare Caberlot grape. To date, this remains the only commercial winery planted to this rare variety. The estate very kindly followed up the vertical of older vintages which I tasted over the summer with a range of samples of their most recent releases, with all but the newly released 2018 showing up in magnums this time around! This was extremely generous of the Rogosky family, as they only produce a total of two hundred cases a year of Il Caberlot and the wine is precisely allocated to a long-running list of clients who are only given the opportunity to purchase two or three magnums each vintage! So, I was very honored to see four magnums of more recent vintages of Il Caberlot arrive on my stoop! After now having tasted thirteen vintages of this superb wine over the last few months, I can unequivocally say that this is one of the greatest wines made in all of Tuscany, and in the realm of Super Tuscans, the only wine that I can think of in my tasting experience that has moved me so much upon first getting to know the wine was the 1985 vintage of Sassicaia, which had always been the greatest bottle of Super Tuscan wine I

had ever had the pleasure to drink, up until I had my thirteen vintage immersion class in the magic that is Il Caberlot! Though all of the vintages of Il Caberlot I have reported upon in the last few months are still years away from their true apogees of maturity, it does seem to me that several of these will reach the same exalted heights of refinement and complexity as that legendary vintage of Sassicaia. It somehow seems fitting that when the Il Carnasciale vineyard was first planted, a bottle of Sassicaia was laid into the ground as well as a good luck charm for the project.

Podere Il Carnasciale is owned by the Rogosky family, who first cleared and planted their small, one-third of a hectare vineyard in southern Tuscany in 1986. The husband and wife team of Wolf and Bettina Rogosky watched their “baby” quickly earn praise throughout Italy. Sadly, Wolf passed away in 1996 and was only able to see the first few chapters of this beautiful wine, but has now been succeeded by his son, Moritz as ambassador for the wines of Il Carnasciale. What is most remarkable about the wine that they produce from their hilltop, tiny gem of a vineyard is that the original parcel was planted with a very rare genetic cross of Cabernet Franc and Merlot, which was discovered by agronomist Remigio Bordini in an abandoned vineyard outside of Verona fifty years ago and was nurtured and propagated in his nursery for many years, prior to his sanctioning it to be planted at Il Carnasciale in the mid-1980s. To date, this is the only commercial planting of the Caberlot grape anywhere in the world! Wolf and Bettina Rogosky planted their vineyard in 1986 and produced their first vintage of Il Caberlot from the “third leaf” in 1988, and the wine has been eagerly sought after since that very first vintage. It is an extremely elegant and refined example of a Super Tuscan, with its unique blend of personalities from the Cabernet Franc and Merlot grapes providing a certain sense of Bordeaux familiarity to the wines, but with the *terroir* of southern Chianti also very strongly in evidence and placing this wine stylistically squarely in the natural realm of Tuscany’s greatest wines.

One of the very unique aspects of this already very singular wine is that Il Caberlot is only sold in magnum, with the regular-sized formats that I have reported on for some of the vintages having only been produced in a very tiny number of bottles as samples for journalists or to be used for the small handful of tastings where the wine is featured. The Rare Wine Company, who sells a small allocation of magnums of Il Caberlot now for the American market, had some of these sample bottles still in their library after having done tastings in the past and very kindly offered them to me when I was working on my annual Italian wine feature over this past summer. If my memory serves me correctly, I may have had the opportunity many, many years ago to taste one or two previous vintages of Il Carnasciale’s wine at larger tastings, but I had never before had the chance to taste several vintages side by side, as I did this past summer, so the tasting for me was a first time opportunity to really understand just how brilliant Il Caberlot is year in and year out and to be able to place it squarely amongst the very greatest bottlings of Super Tuscans produced in Italy. As Il Caberlot is the only wine made in the world from this new grape variety, it stands apart from so many of the other great IGTs of Tuscany, as it is not a wine produced from either Cabernet Sauvignon or Sangiovese, but rather a wine that stands apart because of its utterly singular varietal composition of Caberlot. However, what I love most about this wine is that it combines the unique signature elements of the Caberlot grape with a very transparent and classical signature of Tuscan *terroir*, and is a wine that is clearly a synthesis of both its singular grape and its beautiful place of origin, making it clearly at home within the realm of the very finest wines of Tuscany.

As I mentioned above, Podere Il Carnasciale's Caberlot bottling has only been produced since its debut in the 1988 vintage. As the wine is made in very small quantities and only sold in magnum (or the occasional double magnum), since its debut, the wine is sold as many of the limited release wines of the past have been sold, by an allocation list, with those fortunate enough to have climbed high enough on this distribution chart to be offered one or two magnums quite delighted to be able to buy the wine. To my knowledge, no client of Il Carnasciale has yet received a full case of the wine! The wine began as an insider's bottling within Italy and was quickly chased after by many of this country's finest restaurants, with its fame slowly spreading to include wine lists of some of France's three-starred Michelin establishments and passionate Italian wine collectors around the globe. In 2005, The Rare Wine Company was able to convince the Rogosky family to allow them to offer a small allocation to American wine collectors, and it has quietly been available here in the US since that time. One gets the sense that those who already know about the beauty of Il Caberlot have little desire to spread the word any further, as with only two hundred cases produced in a bountiful vintage and a long-standing waiting list already limiting its availability, fans of Il Caberlot would clearly prefer for the wine to not garner any more attention.

This Super Tuscan is composed entirely from the Caberlot grape variety, which is a singular, natural crossing of cabernet franc and merlot and which possesses the aromatic and flavor characteristics of both grapes, and hence its name of Caberlot. It is only planted in one place, in the tiny Il Carnasciale vineyard located in the mountainous southern Chianti region of Valdarno di Sopra, about thirty kilometers north of Siena. As I mentioned back in the summer, the Caberlot clone was originally discovered in an abandoned vineyard near Verona in the late 1960s and then nurtured by agronomist Remigio Bordini in his nursery since its discovery; Remigio has only allowed it to be planted in one place- Il Carnasciale. Il Carnasciale was cleared and planted by Wolf and Bettina Rogosky in 1986, who continued as the proprietors of this tiny gem of a winery up until Wolf's passing a few years ago. Il Carnasciale has continued on, now run by Bettina and her son, Moritz. Their stony hilltop, south-facing and windswept vineyard was densely planted at ten thousand vines per hectare from the outset and the wine was first produced in 1988. The grapes are completely destemmed and initial fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats. The wine is transferred to cask for malolactic fermentation, with sixty percent of the very lightly-toasted barrels new each year, and spends eighteen months in barrel aging. Bottling for Il Caberlot is done by hand, only in magnums or double magnums, and then the wine is allowed another two years of additional bottle aging in the cellars before it is prepared for sale. As I mentioned above, the winery does bottle a very, very small number of 750 milliliter bottles for tastings and for journalistic samples, which they whimsically label as "demi-magnums". I have given the projected window for peak drinkability of each vintage of Il Caberlot below- from the wines that I have tasted from regular-sized sample bottles- that reflect the wines as I tasted them in the smaller journalistic sample bottles. But, for those who have been lucky enough to have a few of the magnums in their cellar, I would suspect that adding at least three to five years to the proposed "start to drink" date would be merited for the larger formats that are found in commercial channels.

As Moritz Rogosky at Il Carnasciale had not sent any "sample" bottles to The Rare Wine Company of the more recent releases, he very generously agreed to send magnums of the

vintages from 2015 to 2018, so that my vertical report could be brought up to date with the wines that have been released in the last couple of years. There has been a bit of further planting of the grape variety on the Il Carnasciale hilltop, beginning in the late 1990s, so that production is set to eventually increase by a small amount. But, since the 2000 vintage, these younger vines have been bottled on their own, rather blended with the production from the original vines that date back to 1986, so there is now a “second label” produced by the winery which the simply label as “Carnasciale” and bottle in regular-sized bottles, rather than magnums. I have not yet had an opportunity to taste the younger vine cuvée, but will look forward to doing so when the next vintage is released and will include a note on that wine in my next big Italian wine report. Il Caberlot itself is truly a stunning wine, with a very elegant, complex and refined personality. As one would expect from a wine produced from a natural genetic crossing of cabernet franc and merlot, the wine is most often quite black fruity in personality, and clearly possesses some of the velvety textural qualities that one finds in great merlot. I have heard it described occasionally as either Pomerol-like or Graves-like in its fruit signature from its grape of origin, but it seems to me that the wine is so beautifully transparent in personality, and hence firmly tied to its excellent Tuscan *terroir*, that neither of those descriptions really does justice to the unique beauty that is Il Caberlot.

The vineyard of Il Carnasciale is divided up at the present time into four distinct parcels, with the fifth one that was planted in the late 1990s still segregated from the original four. One of these is named Vincaie and it would be the first parcel to have a separate bottling. The winery has produced a special Riserva bottling on only one occasion in its history (thus far), which was in the 2016 vintage, when, in addition to the regular magnums of Il Caberlot, the Rogosky family also produced a tiny amount of a “Vigna Vincaie” Riserva bottling, of which they produced three hundred magnums. As Moritz Rogosky explained when I asked about this sole Riserva that arrived at my doorstep, “we had two barrels in the 2016 vintage from the Vincaie vineyard, and which were simply taking more time than the others with their aging,” so “we discussed the idea of keeping them in the cellar a bit longer, figured out the logistics (you know the size of the cantina at Carnasciale) and let them be for an additional 8 months, for a total of almost 30 months in wood.” As Moritz notes, the 2016 Vigna Vincaie Riserva “is a pure and carefully curated expression of the Caberlot grape from a single vineyard”, but it does not possess the same character one finds in the traditional Il Caberlot blend from the four different vineyard parcels. However, it is an interesting variation on the classic theme here in representing the unique *terroir* of only one of the four parcels of vines at Il Carnasciale and did indeed turn out beautifully in 2016, leading to the idea of exploring another single parcel bottling of Riserva sometime in the future if opportunity allowed. Moritz noted that they did not entertain the possibility in the short crop of 2017, but has isolated a couple of barrels in the 2018 vintage from a different parcel, called Perelli, which will also be bottled as a Riserva from that year.

Il Caberlot is one of Italy’s greatest wines and is very much worth a special search to add to the cellar for those who love Super Tuscans. The wines are very rare and hence, not inexpensive, but given where some other wine prices around the world have gone to in recent times, the Il Caberlot price tag does not seem out of line with the going rate for the world’s greatest wines in this day and age. And, unlike some of its contemporaries, at least the wine on the other side of the cork is always stunning in quality. I have combined my notes from this past summer with the tasting notes on the more recent vintages that the winery sent me at the start of

November of this past year, so that this is a properly thorough look at this beautiful Super Tuscan bottling. As I hope the tasting notes below convey, Il Caberlot is a very refined and elegant expression of IGT, which is not always easy to craft in these days of dramatic climate change. The windy, higher elevation vineyard site has a lot to do with retaining this superb sense of elegance in the wines from Il Carnasciale, and we might infer, that this is also the inherent nature of the Caberlot grape variety. But, as it is only planted in this one small hilltop vineyard in southern Chianti, there are simply no other examples produced with which to compare the wines of Il Carnasciale and ascertain whether the grape that was discovered and lovingly cultivated by Remigio Bordini in his nursery, all the way back in the late 1960s, is largely responsible for the unrepentant elegance of these wines, or if it is the aesthetic genius of the proprietors and winery team that cultivates this personality in the wines. Or, most likely, it was the fortuitous act of fate that brought the vineyard, the Rogosky family and *Signor* Bordini's beloved Caberlot grape altogether in 1986 and it is the blending of variety, vineyard and human artistry that have conspired to produce this magical Tuscan wine.



2018 Il Caberlot “Trentesimo”- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2018 is the thirtieth vintage of Il Caberlot ever produced by Podere Il Carnasciale, so the Rogosky family has naturally noted this on the label with the “Trentesimo” moniker to mark the occasion. I have to also note my satisfaction at receiving a sample of this wine in a regular-sized bottle (remember that Il Caberlot is only commercialized in magnums), with the label

dutifully reporting it as a “demi-magnum”. The wine is an absolute classic in the making, offering up a pure and complex nose of cassis, dark berries, a touch of Tuscan herb tones, Cuban cigar wrapper, a beautiful base of soil tones and a deft framing of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, refined and full-bodied, with a fine core of black fruit, lovely soil inflection, ripe, buried tannins and a long, superbly balanced and seamless finish. I love the sense of grace here, as the wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane and shows a beautiful synthesis of perfectly ripe fruit and classical aesthetic sensibilities. What a wine to mark the thirtieth anniversary vintage of Il Caberlot! 2032-2080+. **96.**

2017 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale (served from magnum)

The 2017 vintage of Il Caberlot is another absolutely seamless young wine, which perfectly exudes the sense of elegance that is the calling card of this rare and beautiful Super Tuscan. I love the tobacco expression on the nose here, which smells like the finest Cuban cigars I have ever been around, coupled with notes of black cherries, sweet dark berries, dark soil tones, just a hint of fresh oregano, gentle notes of woodsmoke and a very suave foundation of nutty oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and utterly polished on the attack, with a rock solid core, excellent soil signature and grip, ripe, firm tannins, good acids and impeccable focus and balance on the very long, very fine finish. This seems destined to get a bit Pomerol-like as it ages long term, albeit, still firmly embedded in its Tuscan *terroir*. A beautiful wine. 2037-2085. **95+.**

2016 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale (served from magnum)

I love the personality of the 2016 Il Caberlot, which seems to have its feet more firmly planted in its Super Tuscan heritage, rather than flirting with Right Bank Bordeaux attributes, as is the case with some of its recent vintage brethren. It is not that I prefer one facet of the wine’s personality over the other, but rather cherish its ability to lean one way or the other, depending on the particular style of a given vintage. In any case, as has been true of other recent vintages, the 2016 Il Caberlot comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol and offers up a precise and perfectly ripe bouquet of cassis, black cherries, dark soil tones, cigar ash, fresh oregano, just a whisper of road tar, cigar wrapper and a beautifully refined foundation of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and full-bodied, with a beautiful core of fruit, fine saline mineral undertow, ripe, well-integrated tannins and lovely focus and grip on the very long, well-balanced and complex finish. This is a touch more powerful in personality than utterly svelte 2017, but it is another absolutely stunning wine in the making- which of course, is hardly a surprise! 2031-2080. **95.**

2016 Il Caberlot “Vigna Vincaie” Riserva- Podere Il Carnasciale (served from magnum)

The Vigna Vincaie Riserva bottling of Il Caberlot is stunning in 2016. The wine seems, at this early stage in its evolution, even more refined than the regular 2016 Il Caberlot, but also sharing the vintage’s marvelous depth and perfectly ripe fruit. The nose wafts from the glass in an elegant blend of sweet cassis, black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, Cuban cigars, a gorgeous base of dark soil (that again seems quite salty in this vintage), coffee bean, fresh oregano, a touch of violets and a classy framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a stunning core of fruit, marvelous mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish of exceptional balance and finesse. This is utterly brilliant! 2031-2080+. **98.**

2015 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale (served from magnum)

The warm summer of 2015 has produced a lovely example of Il Caberlot, but the style of the vintage has made a mark on this fine bottle, which is a bit of an outlier stylistically from

other recent vintages that I have tasted. It still comes in listed at 13.5 percent alcohol in 2015, but seems a touch more fruit-driven in profile than the 2016 or 2017, though it is not overtly powerful in personality and still shows lovely transparency. That said, the bouquet is excellent, jumping from the glass in a mix of cassis, black raspberry, dark soil tones, cigar wrapper, fresh oregano and sage, bonfire, a touch of mocha and a deft framing of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and full, with a good solid core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, well-balanced finish that closes with just a hint of road tar on the backend. This seems likely to start to drink with overt generosity fairly soon, but has the balance to also age very well indeed. Good juice. 2027-2065. **93.**

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2014 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2014 vintage of Il Caberlot comes in at 13.5 percent octane and is an absolute classic year for this beautiful Super Tuscan bottling. The wine is starting to really develop beautifully on the nose, wafting from the glass in a complex blend of cassis, sweet dark berries, cigar wrapper, a beautiful base of soil tones, a touch of road tar, cedary oak and a topnote of gentle botanicals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beginning to get very suave on the attack, with a fine core of black fruit, lovely soil signature and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. This wine is still in climbing mode and deserves several more years in the cellar before drinking in earnest, but once it reaches its plateau of maturity, it is going to be a stunning of exceptional elegance. 2029-2075. **94+.**

2013 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

Il Caberlot 2013 is another beautiful wine in the making, with this vintage just a touch more generous in its youthful spirit than the 2014, though it also tips the scales at 13.5 percent alcohol, it has seemingly taking on more of the merlot side of its unique genetic blending of grape personalities. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up scents of cassis, cigar ash, merlot-like fresh herb tones, dark soil elements, peonies, a touch of allspice and a refined framing of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already a bit more velvety than the more structured 2014 version, with incipient plushness on the attack, lovely mid-palate depth, suave, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish of impeccable balance and grip. Though the tannins are a bit more buried in the fruit texture of this wine, it too is still on the young side and many years away from peaking. This is quite Pomerol-like in many of its features, but wed to a soil signature that just screams out Tuscany. Great juice. 2027-2075. **95.**

2012 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2012 vintage of Il Caberlot is a tad riper than either the 2013 or 2014, as this wine comes in at an even fourteen percent octane in this year, but every bit as inherently elegant as the wines from the slightly less ripe years. The wine is really starting to blossom beautifully aromatically, offering up scents of dark berries, cassis, a touch of road tar, woodsmoke, that signature base of complex soil tones, beautiful fresh herb tones, a touch of cigar ash and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, elegant and full-bodied, with an excellent core of fruit, plenty of soil undertow and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and a long, focused and beautifully balanced finish of breed and complexity. This is every bit as precise as the slightly lower octane vintages, but the touch more ripeness gives this a bit more youthful generosity and though it is really still a young wine, I would have no regrets to drinking a bottle of the 2012 at this beautiful point in its evolution! In magnum, it is probably still would want a few more years'

worth of bottle aging, but this is a vintage that I would keep an eye on for drinking in the not too distant future. Fine, fine juice. 2021-2075. **95.**

2011 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

Podere Il Carnasciale's 2011 vintage of Il Caberlot is beginning to hit its peak in regular-sized format, offering up a pure, complex and utterly refined bouquet of cassis, blackberry, cigar wrapper, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, gentle, merlot-like herb tones, exotic hints of both dried eucalyptus and lavender and a suave framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and generous on the attack, with a superb core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins that are starting to recede nicely and a long, focused and seamlessly balanced finish of admirable complexity. This is simply gorgeous wine! 2021-2070. **96.**

2010 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2010 vintage of Il Caberlot comes in listed at the same 13.5 percent octane as most of these vintages, but this is a deeper-pitched and more black fruity version of this iconic Super Tuscan bottling. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up notes of sweet dark berries, road tar, cigar ash, a beautiful array of Tuscan herbs, a complex base of soil tones, a bit of espresso, dried eucalyptus and the wine's customary framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite velvety in texture, with a plush core of fruit, lovely soil signature, melting tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish of impeccable balance. Like the 2013 vintage, this seems to be channeling its "merlot side" a bit more in its personality makeup. There is still a good structure here underneath and the wine has decades and decades still ahead of it, but it is hardly a crime to be drinking it now at ten years of age! A beautiful bottle. 2021-2065. **94.**



2009 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2009 Il Caberlot is another fairly black fruity vintage for this wine, offering up a lovely aromatic constellation of cassis, dark berries, Tuscan herb tones, cigar ash, a dark base of soil tones, road tar, a hint of menthol and a topnote of cigar smoke. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure, complex and nicely plush at the core, with excellent soil undertow, moderate, well-measured tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is a slightly broader-shouldered vintage for this cuvée, which is the style of the vintage, but it is still very refined and an absolutely delicious wine. 2021-2065. **93.**

2008 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

The 2008 vintage of Il Caberlot comes in listed at the same 13.5 percent octane as the 2009 version, but it comes across as slightly cooler in aromatic and flavor profile, despite being of the same ripeness. The bouquet is pure and very refined on the '08, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, sweet cassis, cigar wrapper, a beautiful base of soil, Tuscan herb tones, espresso, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with lovely delineation and complexity, a superb core of black fruit, lovely soil undertow, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, very elegant finish. This is a gorgeous vintage of Il Caberlot. 2021-2065. **95.**

2007 Il Caberlot- Podere Il Carnasciale

Il Carnasciale's 2007 vintage of Il Caberlot is really starting to drink splendidly at fourteen years of age. This wine is starting to show some of its cabernet franc origins in its very refined aromatic constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, a touch of menthol, cigar wrapper, that signature foundation of complex soil tones, gentle Tuscan herb tones, a touch of lead pencil and cedary tones from the oak casks. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and seamless, with lovely depth of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins, bouncy acids and laser-like focus on the very long, complex and impeccably balanced finish. No wonder Il Caberlot is ranked as one of the unofficial First Growths of Super Tuscans! This wine is just starting to drink well, but is still really in climbing mode and will be even better five to ten years down the road, when its tannins have fully melted away. Utterly brilliant. 2021-2065. **96.**