

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

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THE LIVING HISTORY THAT IS WINE PART ONE- BURGUNDY



I was sitting in Beaune in the quiet end of November, after the international crowds who attend the Hospices de Beaune auction each year had returned to their homes. For some reason, I started reflecting upon the more than thirty years that have passed since my first visit to the region in the spring of 1991, having arrived to taste some of the 1989s out of cask, and reveling a bit on the living history that is the world of wine. It is a marvel that we sometimes tend to overlook, as we race through our daily lives and then settle in to savor something beautiful in our wine glasses with dinner each evening. It struck me as especially poignant on this particular morning, as my espresso cup ran dry and I headed out of the café across from the Hospices de Beaune to start the day's round of tastings, as I imagine that there are many lovers of Burgundy today who do not have any personal experience with some of the great wines crafted by the most recently-retired generation of people who have walked these streets and helped make this region's renaissance such a vibrant mosaic of comfortable accomplishment that it is in the twenty-first century. We live today in a world where wine's cup truly runneth over and this is a direct result of the efforts of so many of the talented, visionary and uncompromisingly dedicated *vignerons* of our recent past; if we are truly to savor their great accomplishments today, we need to learn a bit about and celebrate their important history and not solely decant one of their old

bottles at a special dinner. The gift of wine is not only in the magnificence that we find in our glasses from night to night, but also in the ties it creates between our present day lives and this recent past.

Wine is a living history. In the modern world, where so much is forcibly divorced from the past in favor of embracing the blind leap into the future, it is truly a gift to have such a strong historical footprint that is wine appreciation as part of our daily lives. It rounds us and enriches us. So I thought it would be worth a bit of time to put a small historical series together celebrating some of the marvelous winegrowers whose careers have ended during the course of my own professional career, or whose creative period has coincided with mine, and whose wines we may still have in our cellars. These bottles should serve as stirring testimonials to the myriad of these winegrowers' accomplishments during their own working days, and will continue to deliver enormous pleasure as we reflect upon their wines and the artists behind them over the coming years. For great wine, when it is crafted properly is a living, breathing reflection of its *terroir* and the person or persons who painstakingly nurtured their vines over the course of a particular growing season and then lovingly brought the wine forth through care and attention to detail in their cellars during the period leading up to its bottling. After which, it was scattered to the four corners of the globe for like-minded spirits to tuck away in their own cellars and let time work its magic. And sometimes this magic in the bottle outlives the person behind it, so it is important to celebrate not only what is "new" in the world of wine, which is so easily done as we look ahead from one vintage to the next, or to the next "discovery" of a great new producer or blossoming wine region on the horizon, but also to take time to marvel at what is "old" in the world of wine.

As I began writing this article while in Beaune, let me start off this series with the Burgundy region. Given the talented visionaries of wine who have truly transformed the world during their careers in the second half of the twentieth century and the first couple of decades of the twenty-first, to try and pay homage to the accomplishments of all the talented *vignerons* in every region would obviously take too many pages to be included in a single article (though it might make an interesting book), so I will plan this as the first part of a series to recognize just a few of the great Burgundian winegrowers who I have come to know over the course of my career, many of whom are directly responsible for the amazing renaissance that is the world of wine today. I will plan to cover other regions and talented producers in future articles in this series. My thirty plus years of visiting Burgundy have overlapped with the careers of some of the greatest personages to ever inhabit the Burgundian landscape in its long, long history, and the amazingly vibrant market for the wines of the region that exists today can be directly traced back to their efforts a generation ago. There are a great many producers from my own generation who were the very talented, young, up and coming *vignerons* and *vignerottes* when I first started to learn about Burgundy, and many of these marvelous people will soon be winding up their careers and passing on the baton to the next generation. For example, Dominique Lafon has just retired at the end of 2021, Christophe Roumier, Vincent Dauvissat and Jean-Louis Trappet will follow in the not too distant future, and many of the others from their generation of winegrowers and proprietors will let the curtain fall on their careers in the coming years. So we are on the cusp of some momentous changes at some of Burgundy's greatest domaines.

France's mandatory retirement age of sixty-five will see several of these *vignerons* pass on the reins to their Burgundian domaines earlier than might be truly necessary, as many of these winegrowers remain in the bloom of health and have no shortage of energy, but this system also allows for the next generation to get an earlier start than they might otherwise have if retirement ages were more flexible in France. However, rather than focus on my own generation of winegrowers, whose retirements are now upon us or hovering just beyond the near horizon, I would like to start this series by looking back to the previous generation of Burgundians who inhabited a moment in the region's history that was not as financially robust or as emphatically quality-conscious as the one we know today. These were the veteran winegrowers shaping the region when I first started to visit thirty years ago. As was the case throughout so much of Europe, the two world wars left such deep scars on the Burgundian landscape that it really took half a century from the close of World War I for the people of the region to start to feel somewhat financially and emotionally secure again, and the era of previous deprivation caused by the wars and all of their attendant human suffering and financial difficulties were very much still present in the psyches of many Burgundians of a certain age deep into the twentieth century. In much the same way that my ninety year-old father's world view remains shaped to some degree by the period of the Great Depression that he lived through as a boy, the people of Burgundy when I first arrived here in the spring of 1991 still felt palpably the very real hardships that their parents' generation had to struggle against for most of their adult lives. This was particularly true of the older generation here at that time, who were well into their careers running their family domaines. Though things had really started looking up here beginning with the 1985 vintage and its following string of excellent years, the hardships of the recent past were never all that far below the surface and still colored many a *vigneron's* underlying philosophies.

I should mention at the outset that the following little history is highly personal in nature and is by no means exhaustive, as these veteran *vignerons* and *vignerottes* who were tending their vineyards and crafting the wines that I eventually fell in love with, certainly had many important contemporaries whom I simply did not have the opportunity to get to know as well as the people who I write about below. For the Burgundy trade in the 1980s and early 1990s was far different than the one that so many of us know today. It was far more insular and one had to invest time and patience to peel back its many layers and start to get closer to its beating heart. One did not just approach an importer of a certain domaine's wine as a merchant and state that "I would like to buy cases of all of the grand crus and premier crus from a certain top domaine in the 1985 vintage, please", as one would be told that the wines were simply not available. Often, importers would go so far as to not even list some of their finest Burgundian producers in their lineup of estates that they represented and it required quite a bit of research to discover that yes, such and such an importer actually sold Domaine Dujac's wines, in addition to the wines from Domaines Pierre Amiot and Pothier-Riusset that they happened to be offering in a given vintage. So, in my early days in the trade, I would happily buy a selection of wines from the domaines that were offered to me by this importer, and managed to discreetly enquire about Domaine Dujac's wines at the same time. And eventually a case of 1985 Clos de la Roche, a couple of cases of Morey St. Denis *villages* and a case of the domaine's Vin Gris from the vintage (can you believe there was actually a *rosé de saignée* made at Domaine Dujac from bleeding the vats slightly in the 1985 vintage!) arrived on the pallet with the wines from the other domaines.

This was how Burgundy was sold back in those days, so it was not always possible to inculcate relationships with all of the importers of all of the domaines that one wanted to carry in their shops or on their restaurants' wine lists. There was simply not enough elasticity in the Burgundy budget or room on the shelves or on wine list to purchase everything tied into getting a few cases from the most famous domaines of the time- especially in highly-praised vintages such as 1985, and there was also much less information written about the region than is the case today, so there was a relative dearth of other people's research that one could rely upon as a wine buyer at the time. It was catch as catch can. So, these profiles that follow simply touch upon some of the people and wines that I was fortunate enough to come to know during my association with the region during my career. Given how little was written about Burgundy back in this era, it was eventually incumbent upon me if I wanted to specialize in Burgundy to start to visit the region and taste as widely as possible in the cellars, which certainly allowed my familiarity with Chablis and the Côte d'Or to grow exponentially once I could talk my bosses into financing the trips. Thirty-five years on since I first started working with the wines of Burgundy back with the release of that beautiful vintage of 1985, which was the first "great" year to come along during my early days in the trade, I have come to understand that many of these veteran winegrowers from this era who I was able to meet on my first trips to the region were the same ones who built the foundation upon which the entire prosperity of the region rests today; many of them had to do so by swimming against the strong tides of expedience, current fashion and maximized profitability that were prevalent at the time.

I should also take a bit of time here at the outset to discuss the current day pricing of many of the wines that will figure prominently in the discussion of some of the great Burgundian *vignerons* of this most recently-retired generation featured below. I am very much aware of how exceedingly expensive many of these wines are today, as Burgundy's pricing structure has erupted in the last dozen years. On one hand, I am happy for the current generation of winegrowers who are now able to experience a level of financial security and comfortable affluence that never existed in their parents' and grandparents' time, and given just how good their wines are today, I suppose they deserve their current degree of wealthy prosperity. But, this is something that has only developed over the last dozen years or so and, of the producers who are highlighted below, probably none of them ever made any substantial money from their efforts during their own careers, other than Henri Mayer in the last handful of years of his lifetime. Certainly not to a degree of what an average person might consider "wealthy", though these greats of the recent past were certainly comfortable enough and able to build a solid financial foundation for their family domaines prior to passing them on to the next generation. Or, at least they were ready to handle the brutal inheritance taxes that continue to cripple many of France's greatest wine regions as family control passes from one generation to the next. But, their wines were not exorbitantly expensive during their active selling days, and by and large, they would generally sell out the cellar door for pretty much the same as all of their neighbors' wines, no matter how much better their own wines might have been.

This was the old style of Burgundy culture, where many of the inhabitants in the town of Meursault for instance, might have gossiped quite disapprovingly if Jean-François Coche decided to sell his bottles of Meursault for twice as much as his neighbors, for prices were more or less the same from everyone. It was Monsieur Coche's importers who sold his wines for much more than those of other producers in Meursault, and it was these merchants who made the

money in those days, not the Coche family. This was simply how things were done in Burgundy at the time. Even today, one can see this traditional Burgundy ethos still alive and well in Chablis, where many producers lament the fact that the region is still relatively inexpensive by today's Burgundy pricing standards, due primarily to the fact that the Raveneau and Dauvissat family's refuse to steeply raise prices for their wines to keep pace with what is going on in the Côte d'Or. I certainly benefited personally from the old situation, for though Burgundy was *relatively* expensive in my early days in the trade, a great bottle cost nothing like it does today. I certainly doubt if I could have ever learned what I did about the region if the bottles of Chambertin, Musigny, Chevalier-Montrachet or Chablis "les Clos" that I bought back in the day had been priced at several thousand dollars per bottle, as so many are today, rather than the fifty, or sixty or seventy-five dollars per bottle I would pay for them back then. It was a possibility that helped the wine world burst into bloom for me and may never exist again for those not possessing extreme wealth. One day this may end up being a sad situation for the Burgundians themselves, as Raphaël Coche touched upon when we were tasting together at the domaine this past December, if the wines become so expensive that they can only be used as investment vehicles or consumed by the very richest people on the planet. So, I hope the mention of the wines from these legendary *vignerons* that appear below is not seen as a boastful listing of "look what I have drunk", but rather as a celebration of all the good that was in the world during those times, thanks to these winegrowers' extraordinary passion for their vineyards and their tireless commitment to building an enduring legacy of Burgundy's beautiful wines.



Jacky Truchot outside of the entrance to his home, about a decade ago.

Way back in the spring of 1991, on my very first visit to the Côte d'Or, I stayed at the home of Liliane and Jacky Truchot in Morey St. Denis, as I was travelling with their American importer, Peter Weygandt, and the Truchot family kindly made room for me to also stay there during our short visit. Today, more than fifteen years after his retirement at the close of 2005, Jacky Truchot has grown to be seen as one of the finest producers of his generation, but this was not the case at the time of my first visit and fame took a long time to find Monsieur Truchot. Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, Jackie Truchot and his wines were so under the radar that very few Burgundy collectors in the US even knew about his wines, and I was fortunate to be introduced to them right at the outset of my long-running love affair with the region. Today, they are amongst some of the most prized wines of any *vigneron* from that era, but they were decidedly “insider’s wines” during those early days. Jacky’s career officially ended after the 2005 vintage, when he reached mandatory retirement age in France, and he eventually sold the family’s vineyards, as neither of his children had decided to follow a career as a winegrower. He still made a very small amount of wine from a parcel of vines in the Morey St. Denis premier cru of les Sorbés after his retirement, as the French government allows retired *vignerons* to continue to make a bit of wine to keep their hands busy after the age of sixty-five.

Jacky produced wines during his career from the villages of Morey St. Denis, Gevrey-Chambertin and Chambolle-Musigny, with his two lone grand crus being Clos de la Roche and a very old vine example of Charmes-Chambertin, whose vines were fully seventy years of age when I first walked among them in the spring of 1991. His signature wine was probably his premier cru vineyard of Morey St. Denis “Clos Sorbés”, which was by far his largest holding in any of his premier crus. Monsieur Truchot’s wines were always beautifully transparent and *terroir*-driven wines, with gloriously pure fruit tones and suave, balanced structures that allowed them to age gracefully, but also drink well from a fairly youthful age. Peter Weygandt, the Truchots’ long-time American importer, once described Jacky’s wines as “very much embedded stylistically in the decade of the 1970s in Burgundy”, as they were not particularly deep and powerful wines, but rather relatively lighter-styled examples of their respective *terroirs* that delivered great aromatic and flavor complexity without undue weight. Jacky Truchot sold his wines throughout most of his career for quite modest prices, which made them some of the finest “insider wines” in all of Burgundy during the days that I was a merchant. It was after Jacky’s retirement, that his wines truly caught the attention of a wider, well-heeled Burgundy-loving audience, after which vintages of his wines started to skyrocket in price at auction.

Jacky Truchot was very much emblematic of his generation of *vignerons* in Burgundy, for he was, first and foremost a farmer who cherished his time out in the vines. Jeremy Seysses once told me, when we were discussing Jacky Truchot and his wines, “that Jacky always had to be the first one out in the vines in Morey St. Denis each morning, and if for some reason, someone was out in his vines ahead of him, you knew that Jacky was going to get up even earlier the next day and make sure that he was out there first!” Monsieur Truchot was not born into a family of *vignerons*, but rather started working with his cousin, Henri Mauffré in the mid-1950s and returned to work at Monsieur Mauffré’s domaine full-time in 1961, after coming back from his military service in Algeria. Jacky took over as winemaker for the estate in the early 1960s and as Monsieur Mauffré did not have any children interested in the domaine, plans were made starting in 1973 for Jacky and his wife Liliane to inherit the estate from his cousin. Henri Mauffré passed away in 1980 and Domaine Truchot-Martin was born in this same year. During

Monsieur Mauffré's era, most of the production was sold off to *négociants* and this trend continued for the early years of Domaine Truchot-Martin, but eventually Jacky started to bottle and sell more of his production off under his own label; 1984 was the first vintage he sold to the American market. While Jacky's wines were consistently exceptional, they were not crafted in gleaming cellars or graced with a lot of new oak; they were clearly wines that owed their extraordinary quality to his exceptional farming and quite non-interventionist winemaking style.

I remember well the Truchot cellars on my first few visits, with their dark, damp surroundings, with plenty of mold on the walls and floor and visitors simply spit in the corners of the gravel floors at that time, as it was rare for any domaine to have spittoons in the cellars in this era. All of the casks were old here on my first few visits, as it was not until a few years later that Peter Weygandt could convince Monsieur Truchot to buy a bit more new oak in which to raise his grand crus each year. I recall reading Clive Coates' account of his only visit to Domaine Truchot-Martin, where he opined that the oak was far too old, the cellars far too dirty and the wines far too rustic in style to be anything but third division. I felt bad when I read the review, as I had told Liliane and Jacky Truchot that Clive Coates had a good palate and would understand their wines when they asked me about whether or not they should respond positively to Clive's request for a visit to the domaine. On my next visit with the family I learned that Clive had shown up late in the afternoon, obviously tipsy, and it had not been a particularly enjoyable visit for Jacky to host. Despite the poor reviews from Mr. Coates, Jacky Truchot's wines continued to build up a very loyal clientele, so that at the end of his career, most of his production was being sold off in bottle under his name, rather than to *négociant*. However, they did not become highly sought after by the most affluent Burgundy collectors and jump up dramatically in price until after his retirement. Consequently, for most of his career, they were not only stunning Burgundies, but also fantastic values. Today, Jacky and his lovely wife Liliane continue to enjoy good health and live in their family home on the main street up into the village of Morey St. Denis, happily enjoying their retirement, tucked in between the homes of Lignier cousins and just a bit higher up the hill from Domaine Dujac.

Henri Mayer was a slightly older contemporary of Jacky Truchot and is probably the single most important figure in all of Burgundy in the second half of the twentieth century- at least as far as helping to create the Burgundy that we know today comprised of so many independent *vignerons* crafting wines of very high quality and incomparable expressions of *terroir*. Henri Mayer passed away at the age of eighty-four back in September of 2006, so many contemporary Burgundy lovers may know his name, but have never tasted his wines and probably do not know all that much about his important legacy. Monsieur Mayer was born in 1922, the youngest of three brothers, and he began his career at the age of sixteen taking care of the family's fairly modest parcels of vines, while his older brothers, Georges and Lucien, were both in the French army in the lead up to the second world war. During the war, he was hired to tend a few others' vines in and around Vosne-Romanée (as so many families' husbands and sons were also away in the army), and his fine farming skills led to his contracting in 1945 to look after two of the vineyard parcels owned by Domaine Méo-Camuzet: their Nuits St. Georges "Murgers" and their Vosne-Romanée "Cros Parantoux". At this time the Méo family, who were one of Vosne-Romanée's most important vineyard owners, did not bottle and sell their own wine and almost all of their production was sold off to *négociants*. With advent of this new arrangement with the Méo family, the stage was set for the rest of Henri Mayer's historic career.

Henri Mayer's *métayage* agreement with the Méo family eventually would expand to include his also tending their parcels in the Vosne-Romanée premier cru of aux Brûlées and the grand cru of Richebourg. Monsieur Mayer fell in love with the *terroir* of Cros Parantoux and over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, he would piece together and purchase all of the other parcels of Cros Parantoux that were not owned by the Méo family; several of these were not even planted to vines at the time (as they had been used to grow vegetables during the very lean years leading up to and during World War II) and the fame of Cros Parantoux today rests principally on the efforts of Henri Mayer. The first vintage he was ever able to bottle on his own from his vines in Cros Parantoux was the 1978, as he deemed the vines he had planted in the fallow sections sufficiently old enough by that time to label the wine as Cros Parantoux. Prior to 1978, all of his production from Cros Parantoux had simply been blended into his Vosne-Romanée *villages* bottling.

Like Jacky Truchot, Henri Mayer was first and foremost a farmer, with the big, powerful and gnarled hands of a man who spent most of his waking hours of his adult life tending his vines. Over the course of the 1970s, he came to truly refine his winemaking style and started to gain widespread notoriety for the excellence of his wines. As he kept half of the grapes he farmed from the Méo family's parcels of vines, and also had his own family holdings in Echézeaux, the Vosne premier cru of les Beaumonts, as well as Nuits St. Georges and Vosne-Romanée *villages* parcels, Michelin Three-Starred restaurants soon became some of his most loyal clients for what was a very impressive lineup of cuvées at the height of his career. From these restaurants the fame for his wines soon spread far and wide. Henri Mayer was quite the firebrand in his heyday as a *vigneron*, holding very strong opinions about what constituted proper farming and winemaking techniques and openly criticizing some of his neighbors' wines in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. This was hardly the traditional Burgundian way, and his outspokenness was certainly not welcomed by all. There were stories (perhaps apocryphal?) when I first started visiting Burgundy in the early 1990s of Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti fame, crossing over to the other side of the street in Vosne if he saw Henri Mayer walking his way, just so he would not have to say *Bonjour* to the critical Monsieur Mayer! But, though not all of his neighbors appreciated the sharp Mayer tongue, his clients loved his wines and as the younger Burgundy generation started to take over their own family domaines-*vignerons* such as Christophe Roumier, Jean-Nicolas Méo and Jean-Marie Fourrier- they often looked to Henri Mayer for their inspiration.

During his career, Monsieur Mayer pushed strenuously for lower yields in Burgundy (which had crept up noticeably with the adoption of higher-yielding, easier to tend pinot noir clones during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s), as well as a gentle, non-interventionist approach in the cellars and bottling without fining or filtration. Many today know Henri Mayer's winemaking philosophy primarily for his use of one hundred percent new oak for his top wines, which was probably one of his least successful winemaking precepts (at least to my tastes), but was often latched onto by other producers around the globe looking to emulate the "Mayer recipe" after his wines became so stunningly good in the 1970s and 1980s. Henri Mayer made wine in a quite particular style during his career, as he would completely de-stem his bunches, chill down his cellars to give the newly crushed juice a few days of pre-fermentation maceration (his famous "cold soak") and bottle them unfinned and unfiltered. The 1978 vintage was really his breakthrough year, as he made absolutely stunning wines in '78 and to the end of his days, he

always considered his 1978s the pinnacle of his winemaking career. This was the year where his evolving winemaking techniques all seemed to come together, coupled with a great growing season and his reputation was made for the remainder of his career. However, once hitting upon his preferred *modus operandi* with the 1978s, he never missed a beat and each and every vintage of his from that time until his official retirement in 1995 found him at the absolute top of his game. Wines from what were considered more “minor” vintages like 1979, 1980 and 1982, were unequivocal successes for Monsieur Mayer. Like Jacky Truchot, he kept a small parcel of vines to work and make wine from after reaching his “official” retirement (which he somehow managed to put off a bit longer than customary), as he continued to tend forty-three *ares* of his beloved Cros Parantoux up through the 2001 vintage, which was the last wine that he ever produced.



Jean-Nicolas Méo and Henri Mayer, back in the days when Monsieur Mayer was consulting at Méo-Camuzet.

An important chapter of Monsieur Mayer’s career came to a close when Jean-Nicolas Méo decided to take over the reins of his family’s Domaine Méo-Camuzet in Vosne-Romanée in 1989 and start to make the wines here and sell them in bottle. Henri Mayer had turned sixty-five after the 1988 vintage and his *métayage* agreements from the forties and fifties with the Méo family came to a close with that birthday. I remember Jean-Nicolas commenting that Monsieur Mayer’s sixty-fifth birthday was a crossroads for the family, as “it was either time for me to come back and make the wines and run the domaine properly, or for the family to sell the vineyards.” Happily, Jean-Nicolas chose the first course of action! Henri Mayer entered into a ten year consulting contract with Domaine Méo-Camuzet commencing with the 1989 vintage, so there is a real sense of continuity between wines previously made here by Monsieur Mayer’s (the domaine has started to bottle a bit of their production and sell to private clients beginning in the 1983 vintage, with Henri making the Méo wines from the parcels which he tended for the family) and

the wines fashioned by Jean-Nicolas from 1989 forwards. I asked Jean-Nicolas Méo about how Monsieur Mayer was able to continue making wines from his own family parcels after the 1988 vintage, as he had then reached the age of sixty-five and ostensibly was required to retire at this time. Jean-Nicolas responded that Henri had entered into a sharecropping agreement with his nephew, Emmanuel Rouget, who had already been assisting him for several years in the vineyards prior to Monsieur Mayer's sixty-fifth birthday, so that Henri was able to dodge around the forced retirement threshold for a while by only retaining half of his crop under the *métayage* or *fermage* agreement with Monsieur Rouget. One might also note that this was a "win-win" situation for Emmanuel Rouget as well, as the stunning quality of his own wines during the period from 1989 to 1995 was certainly one of the high water marks of his own career and one suspects that Uncle Henri may well have been lending a hand in the Rouget cellars at this time!

In any event, after the 1995 vintage, Henri Mayer was only allowed to produce a small bit of wine by the French authorities, as is allowed to retired *vignerons* after they reach the age of sixty-five, ostensibly for their own consumption. It is no surprise that Monsieur Mayer decided to continue making a couple of barrels of his beloved Cros Parantoux from the 1996 vintage forwards, which he was able to do up through the year 2001, which was his last vintage in which he produced any wine. I asked Jean-Nicolas Méo if he was aware of what Monsieur Mayer did with his half portion of fruit from their family's vineyards which he sharecropped back in the very early days, and he responded that "Henri did not necessarily follow the pattern of my father" of selling all of the fruit off to *négociants*, but "to the contrary, he was much more advanced with selling bottles." Consequently, "I have a Mayer-labeled- but empty- bottle of Nuits Murgers '64 in my office, that shows he was selling wine in bottle at that time." One presumes that he had a fairly small coterie of private clients for his wines in bottle from the 1960s onwards, but his great fame did not really come until his magical 1978s arrived in the market and started to absolutely dazzle those lucky enough to drink them. I was very, very fortunate to have discovered the wines of Burgundy when I did with the 1985 vintage, as Henri Mayer was still at the absolute peak of his powers in the decade of the 1980s and his wines were still fairly available in the market (if one know where to look), albeit relatively expensive for that time.

Henri Mayer's own domaine-bottled wines were quite hard to come by in the US market in the eighties and nineties (at least through the channels where I bought Burgundy), but they could be found in relative abundance on the wine lists of many top restaurants in France, and there were also other avenues available to sample his wares, as some of the wines he made for his brother Georges (and sold under the Domaine George Mayer label) were available in the London market and not particularly sought after at the time, so I had the opportunity to drink a fairly sizable number of Henri Mayer wines through these non-American outlets over the course of my career. As I was also aware that the wines bottled by the Méo family from the vintages prior to 1989 were also made by him (at least from vineyards sharecropped by Monsieur Mayer), I was able to avail myself of a few of those wines as well, and this was seemingly a fact that was not widely known in the wine market at large and one could find these wines from time to time. As I mentioned above, it was not only the "great" vintages of Henri's wines that were stunning, as I probably drank a lot more of his 1979s, 1980s (a particularly stellar vintage for him), 1982s and 1987s, than I did some of his best known vintages. But, as there were still a few French restaurants with good quantities of his brilliant 1985s on their wine lists into the decade of the 1990s, this was also a vintage I came to know and love through many a repeat performance!

I should take a moment here to try and sort out the myriad of different wines made by Monsieur Mayer over his long career, as there seemingly remains quite a bit of confusion about some of these, at least judging by some of the inaccurate listings I see from time to time at auction. As I mentioned above, Henri Mayer had two brothers, Georges and Lucien Mayer, and both of these produced wines from their share of the family's original vineyard holdings. Lucien Mayer was a talented *vigneron* in his own right and, consequently, his brother Henri was never involved in the production of any of Lucien's wines. However, Georges Mayer was not a *vigneron*, as his chosen career path was Forestry, so his brother Henri tended Georges' share of the family vineyards and made all of the wines bottled under the Domaine Georges Mayer label. There were only two of these, but both were excellent- a Nuits St. Georges AC bottling and an Echézeaux. Clive Coates has mistakenly written in the past that the Georges Mayer Echézeaux was the same wine as Henri's version, but this is most emphatically not the case, as the two brothers owned parcels in different *lieux à dits* in the grand cru and Henri would not have blended the fruit from the two *climats* for his own domaine bottling. Henri owned the largest parcel of the Mayer brothers in Echézeaux, with all of his vines in the *climat* of les Cruots, which Henri felt strongly was the very finest section of the vineyard. Georges Mayer also had a parcel in les Cruots, but his larger plot of vines was in the *lieu à dit* of les Treux, where also their brother Lucien had his own share of the original family holdings in Echézeaux. So, Henri, would make his own distinct Echézeaux bottling from his own vines in les Cruots (presumably coupled with some of Georges' fruit from les Cruots, which he would have received from his sharecropping agreement for tending Georges' vines), and make also his brother Georges' Echézeaux, sourced from his brother's own parcels in Echézeaux (and likely made primarily from Georges' fruit from the *climat* of les Treux, as Henri's preference for les Cruots would lead one to expect that he would take his portion of Georges' fruit from this *climat*), so the two versions of Echézeaux were always separate and distinct wines. I owned and drank a lot more of the Georges Mayer bottling of Echézeaux than I did of Henri's back in the day (as it was pretty much priced along the lines of every other top domaine's example of Echézeaux, whereas Henri's Echézeaux was a much pricier bottle), and the two were most assuredly different wines, with Henri's version always the slightly superior example. You can see the labels of the two different Echézeaux bottlings in the photo on the next page, with the Domaine Georges Mayer bottling on the far right. Note both the different coat of arms on that bottle, versus Henri's own domaine bottlings, as well as the fine print on the bottom left of the label: "Georges Mayer, Propriétaire a Vosne-Romanée".

As I mentioned above, Henri Mayer also made the Domaine Méo-Camuzet wines that were bottled from the vineyards that he sharecropped, once the Méo family started to sell a bit of production off in bottle, which started in the 1983 vintage. So, if one is lucky enough to come across at auction Domaine Méo-Camuzet bottles of Nuits St. Georges "Murgers", Vosne-Romanée "aux Brûlées" or "Cros Parantoux", or Richebourg from the era of 1983 to 1988, all of those wines would also have been made by Henri Mayer. In addition to the wines he made for Domaine Méo-Camuzet and his brother Georges Mayer, Henri Mayer also bottled under his own label, a roster which included- while he was still sharecropping the vineyards from the Méo family- Bourgogne Rouge, Nuits St. Georges AC (from his share of the crop from his brother Georges' vines) and Vosne-Romanée *villages* (with the latter including all of his Cros Parantoux fruit up until the 1978 vintage), Nuits "Murgers", the premier crus in Vosne-Romanée of Beaumonts, aux Brûlées and Cros Parantoux, as well as the grand crus of Echézeaux and

Richebourg. So it is not surprising that so many Three Starred Michelin restaurants came calling in the decade of the 1970s, as this was a very, very fine vineyard lineup at its zenith!



A few of Henri Mayer's wines- note the Georges Mayer Echézeaux at the far right, with a different coat of arms.

I had the good fortune back in 2003 to spend a few hours with Henri Mayer at his domaine in Vosne during his retirement, where we talked of his career, his viticultural and winemaking philosophies and tasted three of his wines which he very generously had prepared. Véronique Drouhin knew Henri well back in this era and had kindly set up the visit for me and a few good friends. Monsieur Mayer still has his hand-written vintage notes dating back at least to the early 1950s in his office that afternoon, which he thumbed through to refresh his memory to some of our questions about past vintages. Listening to Monsieur Mayer recount tales from his career that day, while he shared bottles of 1976 Echézeaux and 2000 Cros Parantoux (and a third bottle served between these two which I cannot recall now- maybe a 1992 Murgers?). He served the wines blind and we managed to guess all of them, which shows how much Henri Mayer wine we were lucky enough to drink back in those glorious days! In fact, on that same trip, our group had drunk bottles of his Nuits “Murgers”, Vosne “Brûlées” and “Cros Parantoux” and Echézeaux- all from the 1985 vintage- over a pair of dinners on consecutive evenings, so one can see that there was indeed a time when Monsieur Mayer's wines were not just part of the mystical past, but also fairly available on certain wine lists in France! During our afternoon visit, Monsieur Mayer looked back on his career and forward into the Burgundy horizon, which he felt was safely in the hands of a new and very dedicated generation of *vignerons* who truly understood how to bring out the best in the region and its wines. Nearly twenty years later, it is clear that Henri's vision at that time for Burgundy's rosy future has indeed come to pass!

I last saw Henri Mayer in November of 2003, at a dinner at a friend's home in Burgundy. He was lively and warm to everyone gathered around the table that evening, though characteristically still quite honest with his evaluations of the wines served and not particularly enamored of a bottle of wine that had included quite a bit of whole clusters and which he still felt was "stemmy" in personality at nearly twenty years old. But, age had also mellowed Monsieur Mayer, and the notably proud, sharp-tongued *vigneron* of his heyday had been replaced by a polite Burgundian elder statesman, at peace with both his career behind him and the beautiful direction Burgundy had taken since his official retirement in 1995. There were several younger *vignerons* at the dinner that evening, and as their wines were served, Monsieur Mayer was supportive and appreciative of each wine poured by the winemaker in attendance. But his eyes really lit up as I decanted the last wine of the evening, a 1921 La Tâche bottled by Domaine Liger-Belair (1921 predating the vineyard's *monopole* status with Domaine de la Romanée-Conti). It is only recently that I have reflected upon that fact that the La Tâche was actually older than Henri! As I poured the wine around the table, he paused and observed: "You know, we are drinking history here—just imagine what was going on in the world at the time this wine was bottled; it is really amazing after all the world has been through since 1921 that this bottle is still here with us today, and that it is still good." As he took a sip of the 1921 La Tâche we all followed suit. And then he observed that "in the end, this is all we can ask for as *vignerons*—as people—to try and make a bit of history." That Monsieur Mayer most certainly did.

Jacques Seysses is another of the seminal figures of his generation in Burgundy that I was fortunate to meet in my early days visiting the Côte d'Or. It is hard today to imagine the Burgundy firmament without the Seysses family's Domaine Dujac in Morey St. Denis, but this is not a particularly old estate by the region's standards, as the first vintage produced here (but all sold off to *négociant*) was in 1968. Monsieur Seysses' domaine was only formed at the tail end of 1967, when Jacques Seysses purchased the former Domaine Marcel Graillet in Morey St. Denis to form the foundation of his new Domaine Dujac. At the time, Domaine Graillet owned 4.5 hectares of vines, almost all of them in the village of Morey St. Denis, along with a fine parcel in the premier cru of Gevrey-Chambertin "aux Combottes". The Seysses family were not of a line of *vignerons*, as Jacques' father, Louis Seysses, was a successful businessman based in Paris with a great passion for *haute cuisine* and the world's greatest wines, and consequently he was the President of the "Club des Cent", a fabled epicurean group of comfortable wine collectors and gourmets who cherished three star Michelin meals and amassed beautiful personal cellars of the world's finest wines. Jacques Seysses would come to share the same love for Burgundy and fine cuisine as his father, and went one step further and decided, after his university degree and a few years in the business world, that he wanted to find his career path as a winegrower in Burgundy! Fortunately, at this time, his father Louis Seysses was already a shareholder in the Domaine de la Pousse d'Or in Volnay (primarily owned at this time by a close friend and fellow Club des Cent member, Jacques Ferte), which was run with great distinction by Gérard Potel, and so a fine winemaking training ground for Jacques was already in place. After attaining a degree in oenology from the University of Dijon, Jacques Seysses joined Domaine de la Pousse d'Or for two harvests in 1966 and 1967 and was then ready to start looking for a domaine of his own by the end of 1967. Fortunately, Domaine Graillet was then currently for sale and at age twenty-six, Jacques Seysses was ready to begin to write his own chapters of Burgundian history.



Jacques Seysses and his family in the vines in 1994, the year Jeremy first began working at the domaine.

The newly-minted, 4.5 hectare Domaine Dujac included parcels in Clos St. Denis, Clos de la Roche, Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes” and several parcels of Morey *villages* level vines. Marcel Graillet had also once owned the *monopole* premier cru of the Clos de la Bussière in Morey, but he had sold this to the Roumier family back in 1953. Jacques Seysses found success from his first bottled vintage of 1969 and the domaine prospered from the beginning, with additional parcels of vines purchased as opportunity allowed over the ensuing years. From the outset, the crown jewel at Domaine Dujac had been their half hectare of vines in the grand cru of Clos de la Roche, which Jacques Seysses added to whenever it was possible. Today, Domaine Dujac has grown to encompass fully fifteen hectares of vines, with their 1.95 hectares of holdings in Clos de la Roche making them the second largest land owner in the vineyard, after the Ponsot family. Their parcels in Clos de la Roche are now augmented by a star-studded lineup of grand crus, such as Clos St. Denis, Echézeaux, Bonnes-Mares, Charmes-Chambertin, Romanée-St.-Vivant and Chambertin, not to mention such beautiful premier crus as Gruenchers in Chambolle-Musigny, Combottes in Gevrey-Chambertin, Beaux Monts and Malconsorts in Vosne-Romanée and several parcels in Morey St. Denis, from which they produce their blended Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru” bottling. Today, the family domaine is run primarily by the second generation of winegrowers in the Seysses family, which includes Jeremy Seysses, his brother Alec (the middle of the three Seysses boys) and Jeremy’s lovely wife Diana. Jeremy Seysses first began working alongside of his father in the Domaine Dujac cellars in 1994 and Jacques Seysses would officially retire as the head of the family domaine in 2004.

During the course of his long career, Jacques Seysses made Domaine Dujac into one of the greatest estates in the entire firmament of Burgundy, hand-crafting beautifully refined, soil-driven Burgundies of stunning, perfumed complexity and potential longevity. Like Henri Mayer, he was a proponent of using new oak for his wines, and for much of his career, all of his grand cru and premier cru bottlings were raised in one hundred percent new oak. However, unlike Monsieur Mayer, Jacques Seysses was always a fan of using some whole clusters for his wines, rather than completely destemming, which is probably a preference that he picked up from his very early days working alongside of Gérard Potel at Domaine de la Pousse d'Or. At the peak of his winemaking career, it was often fairly easy to spot a Domaine Dujac wine in a blind tasting of Burgundy, due to its combination of the influence of its always well-done new oak and the almost cinnamon spice tones that the wines tended to develop with bottle age from the inclusion of a significant percentage of whole clusters. Jacques Seysses was also one of the earliest proponents of farming organically in Burgundy, moving over time from a *lutte raisonnée* approach to full organic farming and eventually biodynamics. The first vineyard the family started converting over to full-blown biodynamics was the Clos de la Roche in 2001. When asked, Monsieur Seysses would often say that the most dramatic improvement in the quality of the fruit his vineyards produced came quite early on in his career, when he first started to eschew the use of chemical herbicides, but that each step along the way to eventual biodynamic farming produced superior quality fruit.

Today, with Alec, Jeremy and Diana Seysses at the helm, Domaine Dujac is one of the best-known and greatest estates in all of Burgundy. Their roster of stunning grand cru holdings can probably only be matched by those of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and Domaine Armand Rousseau, and the consistently excellent quality of their wines is surpassed by no other domaine in the Côte d'Or. It is hard to believe that it all began with four and a half hectares of vines and a new, completely unknown Domaine Dujac at the close of 1967, which by the long historical standards of Burgundy, might as well have been the day before yesterday! But, we have to remember that the modern Burgundy landscape composed primarily of quality-conscious, smaller, independent domaines bottling and selling their own wines is a relatively recent phenomenon, which can really only be traced back to the 1930s, and so an estate such as Domaine Dujac was one of those that came along at the right time, as the region was still in the transition from domaines that primarily sold off their vineyard production to the *négociants* in the region, who had dominated the Burgundian wine trade for several centuries previous (and which really continued to do so on into the 1980s), to a mosaic of independent producers primarily selling off their wines in bottle under their own labels. Jacques Seysses and his beloved Domaine Dujac were one of the pioneers who helped bring Burgundy's new reality into being.

One of the other great veteran Burgundian *vignerons* who I was fortunate to get to know a bit in my early days visiting the region was Jacques d'Angerville in Volnay, who ran his family's Domaine Marquis d'Angerville from the time his father (also named Jacques) retired, until his passing in 2003. The elder Jacques d'Angerville had been one of the most important historical figures in the evolution of estate-bottled Burgundy in the 1930s and the eventual adoption of the Appellation Contrôlée system for Burgundy in 1937, for which he was one of the prime architects. Alongside of Henri Gouges in Nuits St. Georges, Jacques d'Angerville lobbied tirelessly for this new classification for the Burgundy region, which at the time, was beset with fraudulent practices in the cellars of many *négociants* in the region, who were accurately accused

of blending different crus and even non-Burgundian wines into some of their most illustriously labeled offerings from the Côte d'Or. Messieurs d'Angerville, Gouges, as well as Armand Rousseau and Georges Roumier, spearheaded the resistance to such fraudulent practices and refused to sell their production to corrupt *négociants* in this era (not all *négociants* were implicated in such practices, but one does have to acknowledge that fraud was rampant at many *maisons* in this period) and began to estate-bottle and sell their own wines in the 1930s. His son, the Jacques d'Angerville whom I had the good fortune to visit and get to know a bit during the first dozen years that I travelled to taste in the region, started working alongside of his father at age eighteen in 1945 and took over from his father at the head of the family domaine in Volnay in 1952. He continued to run the family domaine with great skill, crafting stunningly beautiful and classically-styled wines here up until his untimely passing at the age of seventy-six in July of 2003.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Jacques d'Angerville was one of the great gentlemen of his generation in Burgundy. He made wines that beautifully reflected their underlying *terroirs*, with no makeup and classic, old school structural chassis that demanded decades in the cellar before they started to really drink with generosity. Unlike some producers of his generation, such as Henri Mayer and Jacques Seysses, Jacques d'Angerville was never a fan of new oak and his top premier cru bottlings generally only saw five to ten percent new oak in any given vintage. In Monsieur d'Angerville's philosophy, buying new oak was a necessity to ensure that there would always be a good rotation of sound casks in the cellar to age the wines in each year, but not a desired aromatic or flavor addition to the profile of his wines. He was never in a hurry to replace older barrels in good condition, as he really liked how his wines evolved in older casks, so there were plenty of barrels in the domaine's cellars during his tenure that were well more than fifty years of age! The Domaine d'Angerville vineyard heritage was primarily located in their home village of Volnay and includes the marvelous *monopole* premier cru vineyard of the Clos des Ducs, as well as excellent parcels in Taillepieds, Caillerets, Champans and Fremiets. These holdings are augmented by smaller plots in the Volnay premier crus of Pitures, les Angles and l'Ormeau, from which the estate makes a blended Volnay "Premier Cru" cuvée. There were also several parcels in *villages* level vineyards in Volnay, as well as a Pommard bottling that was made all from the premier cru section of the Combes Dessus vineyard (the vineyard has both *villages* level and premier cru sections), but which was sold for all of Jacques d'Angerville's career as a Pommard *villages* bottling. The only white wine produced during Monsieur d'Angerville's long career was the domaine's Meursault "Santenots".

Jacques d'Angerville was very much a winegrower who wished for the quality of his wines to be found out in the vineyards, where he had plenty of old vines, and he was one of the great non-interventionist winemakers of his generation. He chose to de-stem all of his bunches prior to pressing, seldom punched down the cap during fermentation, preferring to simply moisten the cap with pump-overs for a more gentle extraction and raised his wines for roughly eighteen months in barrel prior to bottling, with very little new oak used for any given cuvée. The resulting wines were always beautifully transparent in style, but harnessed to firm, chewy structures that took a couple of decades to properly blossom, as the use of so little new oak meant that micro-oxygenation through the pores of the staves was much slower with so many older casks in use. Blessed with old vines and cropping at a low level to create depth and soil signature in his wines, the Domaine d'Angerville wines of his era were always very slow to

unfold in the bottle and were probably Volnay's longest-lived wines during the course of his career. They were very old-fashioned stylistically, in the best of senses, with tangy acids, firm, chewy tannins, superb depth of very pure fruit tones and great soil definition. I have had the good fortune to drink wines from the domaine all the way back to 1934, and from Monsieur d'Angerville's tenure (commencing in 1952) from the 1964 vintage up through his last year of 2002.



However, Monsieur d'Angerville is one of the few producers whose wines I loved from this era that I do not have a strong sense of what were his finest vintages, as a great many of the vintages of Domaine d'Angerville's wines that I drank from the decades of the 1970s and 1980s here in the US were not always in pristine shape. They hailed from an era when many American merchants did not understand the need for proper storage of wine, and as Volnay was not as fashionable in this era as Gevrey-Chambertin or Vosne-Romanée, the likelihood of bottles of Domaine d'Angerville wines languishing in less than ideal storage conditions was quite real and I have had more than my fair share of poorly-stored bottles from vintages such as 1976, 1978, 1979 and 1985 from the domaine. This was just the luck of the draw with older wines back in this era in the states. So my experience with these decades from the domaine is not as deep as it could have been if proper storage protocol had been always followed by merchants. But, I have also had pristine bottles of his wines from this era as well, such as a beautiful bottle of 1966 Pommard and perfect examples of '64, '72 and '78 Clos des Ducs, and those were beautifully

proportioned and classic bottles, so it seems likely that Jacques d'Angerville was an exceptional winemaker during entirety of his career, and I was just unlucky to hit upon several less than pristine bottles from the '70s and '80s. That said, I also have the distinct impression that the last dozen years of his career probably saw him produce his greatest wines, as his examples from the 1989 vintage forwards were truly stunning. He made brilliant wines in 1989 and 1991, typically ripe, roasted and robust examples of the 1990 vintage (that have many, many admirers) and absolutely legendary wines in 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2002. Recall that the 2001 vintage was badly hailed upon in Volnay, so Mother Nature ensured that it was not one of his best. But, it was not only the finest vintages from this last dozen years that saw Monsieur d'Angerville excel, as his 1992s, 1994s, 1998s and 2000s were also among the finest wines of those vintages, his 1995s (like his '88s) excellent in the very structured style of that particular year. Jacques' son, Guillaume d'Angerville, took over for his father in 2003 and has changed the style of the domaine's wines a bit, so there is not really a stylistic continuity here since Jacques' passing. But, there is little doubt that the wines that were crafted by Jacques d'Angerville were some of Burgundy's greatest bottlings during his long career, and I count myself very lucky to have been able to make his acquaintance and get to know him a bit during his lifetime.

Michel Lafarge is another of the towering figures in Burgundy history who has recently passed away and left a stunning lineup of his wines for those of us lucky enough to have tucked a few away in our cellars. Monsieur Lafarge was born in 1929 and passed away in January of 2020 at the age of ninety-one, leaving behind a rich legacy in his beloved village of Volnay. He was a contemporary and friend of Jacques d'Angerville, and their sons, Guillaume d'Angerville and Frédéric Lafarge, went to the same primary school and were in the same grade. So, Jacques d'Angerville and Michel Lafarge would take turns driving the kids to and from school each day! Michel Lafarge was a kind and gracious gentleman and one of Volnay's greatest *vignerons*, spending most of his time in his vines or down in the cellars, but still finding time enough to be the Mayor of Volnay for several decades, following in the footsteps of his father Henri Lafarge. Michel began working alongside of his father in 1946, at the age of seventeen, and spent fully two decades shoulder to shoulder with his father before taking over the direction of the family estate in 1966. He and his son Frédéric, who joined his father in 1978, would follow the same family pattern of collaboration in the vines and in the cellars, working with each other for nearly twenty years at the domaine before Michel "officially" handed over the helm at Domaine Lafarge to Frédéric in 1995. And even after his official retirement, Michel was always to be found in the cellars of Domaine Lafarge, greeting visitors, discussing the style and similarities of the new vintage to some of those of the past and sharing his deep wells of experience with the younger generation; I always had the sense that Michel Lafarge was very much involved with family decision-making surrounding each new vintage right up to his final vintage of 2019.

Michel Lafarge was one of the great visionaries of Burgundy, as well as very much a man of the soil, and his winegrowing style harkened back to the days when the region was almost solely defined by its deep farming roots and the vast, vast majority of its proprietors were small-scale farmers tending their vines the year round and making their wines in the traditions of their families' previous generations. In Michel's early days, many of his neighbors would still sell their production off to *négociants*, but whether they bottled their wines themselves or sold them in casks, they all shared a very similar lifestyle. It was a life tied directly to the earth that they tilled, with a *vigneron's* intimate knowledge of his or her rows of vines often far exceeding their

geographic knowledge of the neighboring village (unless they happened to own some vines there). The Lafarge family was another of the very first domaines to start estate-bottling a significant of their production to sell directly to clients and importers, as they first began selling some wine in bottle in the 1934 vintage, though they continued to sell at least a percentage of their crop as well each year in cask to *négociants* up until Michel took over official control of the domaine in the mid-1960s. From that point forward, the estate has sold all of their wines in bottle. While Michel Lafarge was a man of great tradition, with the true spirit of Burgundy running through his veins, he was hardly a man who eschewed change and spent much time reflecting upon his *métier* and his place in the world. Though he took over the family domaine in 1966, at the peak of the petro-chemical companies' influence in the region, Michel Lafarge never used industrial fertilizers, herbicides or the like in his vineyards and he and his son Frédéric were also amongst the very earliest practitioners of *biodynamique* farming methods, having begun in the mid-1990s and having been certified by Ecocert as early as 2000. *Biodynamics* is very important to place the domaine and its vineyard husbandry in complete harmony with its natural surroundings, but it did not represent a huge viticultural swing for the estate when it was adopted, as the Lafarges have always practiced a very traditional approach in the vineyards, and the move to *biodynamique* farming was more of a logical continuation of the traditional Lafarge farming style in the vineyards, rather than a drastic change of direction.

Domaine Lafarge has a stunning lineup of premier crus in Volnay, as well as a few choice holdings in both Pommard and Beaune. The domaine is loaded with old vines, which hail from the family's own *selection massale* cuttings that they have propagated since the days of Henri Lafarge. They have vines in the Beaune premier crus of Clos des Aigrots and Grèves, as well as Pézerolles in Pommard, but the heart and soul of the domaine is found in their native village of Volnay. Here they own premier crus such as the beautiful *monopole* of the Clos du Château des Ducs (located just up slope from the Clos de la Bousse d'Or), as well Caillerets, Mitans, Pitures, Santenots de Milieu (their parcels here are planted to chardonnay, from which they produce the domaine's Meursault bottlings) and fully one hectare in the file, mid-slope section of the Clos des Chênes. The winemaking style here is very, very traditional, with the Lafarge family including some whole clusters since the days of Henri Lafarge, utilizing native yeasts and raising the wines primarily in old oak casks. In fact, one seldom sees such an array of very old barrels in Burgundy these days (at least since Jacky Truchot retired!) as is found in the Lafarge cellars, other than at Domaine Ponsot. The reds go into bottle unfiltered. Domaine Lafarge wines have remained some of the most beautifully old school, traditional wines in all of Burgundy. They have always been meant to age long and gracefully, in the classic Burgundian style, and start out life properly structured and take many years to start to really blossom. Though Michel Lafarge officially retired in 1995, much of the credit for the classic beauty of the family's wines today can certainly be laid at his doorstep, as he remained committed to the old school way of doing things from his father's era through one of the most dramatic periods of "modernization" in Burgundy in the 1960s and 1970s that led to errors at other domaines and which had to be corrected both out in the vineyards and down in the cellars in the decade of the 1990s. But, this was never an issue at Domaine Lafarge, and the consistent beauty of the wines here from Henri to Michel to Frédéric speaks eloquently of the continuity and fidelity to the beautiful traditions of Burgundy.



Importer Becky Wasserman with Frédéric and Michel Lafarge at a Clos des Chênes tasting back in 2008.

Doctor Georges Mugneret was one of the few important historical figures from this era featured in this article who I never actually had the opportunity to meet in person, as my first trip to Burgundy was a few years after his tragic, sudden passing at the end of 1988. But, I feel I should include him in this feature, as his wines had been some of my absolute favorites when I first started to discover the wines of the region and I loved his personal history, as I had a chance to hear it from his importer back when I was first learning about Burgundy. Doctor Mugneret was born in 1929, the only son of Jeanne Gibourg and André Mugneret. Mademoiselle Gibourg and Monsieur Mugneret were married in 1928, with their son Georges arriving the following year, and the family settled in the village of Vosne-Romanée in 1930. In 1933, they launched their family *Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg*, based on parcels of vines in Bourgogne, Vosne-Romanée and Nuits St. Georges *villages* parcels, as well as the Clos Vougeot and Echézeaux appellations. Jeanne and André's son eventually chose to pursue a career in medicine as an Ophthalmologist, with his practice in Dijon, but at the same time, always continued to run his small family domaine when he was not holding office hours. His parents had to sell their parcel of vines in Clos Vougeot during the fallow years of the Burgundy trade of the 1930s, and as Dr. Georges grew into manhood, he always regretted that his parents had been forced to sell their vines in this grand cru. Finally, in 1953, he was able to buy a new plot of vines in Clos Vougeot, to bring that grand cru back into the domaine's portfolio. Like Jacky Truchot, Georges Mugneret had to perform his military service in Algeria, where he met his future wife, Jacqueline, and the two were married after their return to Burgundy in 1958.

Doctor Mugneret was able to add other vineyard parcels as opportunity allowed, so that eventually the domaine came to occupy its present day size of just over eight hectares under

vine, spread across nine different appellations. His later purchases included vines in the premier cru of Chaignots in Nuits St. Georges in 1971, Ruchottes-Chambertin in 1977, Vignes Rondes in Nuits in 1982 and Feusselottes in Chambolle-Musigny in 1985. For several years, the wines produced from the parcels that Doctor Mugneret purchased in these later years were labeled under the Domaine Georges Mugneret label, rather than the Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg label, but in recent times, his daughters consolidated the two entities and renamed the estate as Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg. Georges Mugneret was a close friend with another of the iconic winegrowers of his generation, Charles Rousseau in Gevrey-Chambertin, and it was Monsieur Rousseau who called very early one morning in 1977 to tell his friend Georges that they needed to go in on a purchase of the extensive Ruchottes-Chambertin holdings of Domaine Thomas-Bassot, which were just about to be announced for sale. They acted without delay and ended up splitting the purchase with a private client of both domaines, businessman Michel Bonnefond, who also ended up with a section of this beautiful grand cru for his own (and which he turned over to the Roumier family to farm and make the wine), while Charles Rousseau took the Clos des Ruchottes portion of the vineyard and Doctor Georges ended up with a splendid parcel as well.

For many years the distinction between the vineyards later purchased by Doctor Georges Mugneret and the original Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg holdings had been important, as the original family plots of eighty-five *ares* of Bourgogne, 3.80 hectare of Vosne-Romanée and 1.25 hectare of Echézeaux, as well as a small parcel of Nuits St. Georges *villages* were subject to long-standing share-cropping agreements, and the domaine only received half the production from these vineyards. While Georges Mugneret continued his full-time career as an ophthalmologist, it was necessary to enter into these contracts to oversee the viticultural side of running the domaine, as he would certainly not have had the time to both continue his medical career in Dijon and work out in the vines each day. Consequently, the estate did not produce a particularly large quantity of bottled wine during his time at the head of the estate, but the wines were always excellent in quality and held a very high reputation in the market. During his career, Georges Mugneret would often spend his days in the office seeing patients in Dijon, and then return to the family home in Vosne-Romanée and work deep into the night in the cellars, tending to the needs of his wines. His two daughters, Marie-Christine and Marie-Andrée (who would take over running the domaine alongside of their mother, Jacqueline Mugneret, after Doctor George's sudden passing in 1988), would often say that as young girls, they were always down in the cellars with their father in the afternoons and evenings, spending time with him while he attended to the *elevage* of his wines.

Georges Mugneret made beautiful wines during his career, which were always classically proportioned and deeply reflective of their underlying *terroirs*. During his days, his wines would be bottled unfiltered after undergoing a light fining. His daughters did away with the fining of the wines in the early 1990s, once they had purchased a sorting table to use for the incoming bunches, and the wines here have been bottled unfining and unfiltered since the 1993 vintage. Doctor Georges was suddenly diagnosed with a fatal illness after the harvest of 1988 and this was the last vintage that he was able to vinify. His older daughter, Marie-Christine had studied Chemistry at the university and was thrust into taking over the winemaking in the immediate aftermath of her father's sudden passing; her younger sister Marie-Andrée was able to study winemaking at the University of Dijon and the two sisters have made the wines here, side by

side, since the 1989 vintage. Over the years, the *métayage* contracts that were so important to allow Doctor Georges to have two concurrent careers eventually ran their course and today, Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg estate-bottles all of their production from their approximately eight hectares of vineyard parcels. A new generation of the Mugneret family is now easing into the transition of directing the family domaine, with daughters Lucie, Florence and Fannie Mugneret now playing an increasingly important role in the vineyard management and winemaking for the estate. During my last visit to the domaine in December of last year, I looked around happily at all of the changes that have taken place since I first visited here in November of 1994. I turned to Marie-Andrée Mugneret, who was conducting our tasting, and I said “I am sure that your father is looking down on all of the changes here and is smiling brightly!” For today, Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg is one of the finest and best-loved domaines in all of the Côte de Nuits, with the excellence of its wines only outshone by the graciousness and intrinsic goodness of his family who he was forced to leave behind all too soon.



Dr. Georges Mugneret at his home in Vosne-Romanée in the 1980s.

Charles Rousseau is another of the very important historical figures in Burgundy that I was lucky to meet when I first started visiting the Côte d’Or, and a tasting at Domaine Armand Rousseau was part of my very first trip to the region in the spring of 1991. Charles took over the direction of the estate when his father, Armand Rousseau, was tragically killed in an automobile accident in 1959 as he was returning from a hunting trip. Armand Rousseau had founded his small domaine in Gevrey-Chambertin in 1900, at the age of eighteen, when he inherited a few parcels of vines in the village. In 1909 he married his wife and they moved into the property that

is still home to Domaine Rousseau today, close to Gevrey's beautiful old church. Over the ensuing decade he was able to add to his original vineyard holdings, acquiring plots of vines in Chambertin, Charmes-Chambertin and Clos de la Roche. Armand Rousseau had started gaining fame for his wines in the 1930s and was encouraged to bottle them himself, rather than sell them all off to *négociants* by Raymond Baudoin, then the editor of the prestigious publication, *La Revue des Vins de France*, who introduced the Domaine Rousseau wines to many of the most illustrious restaurants in France at that time. Much like Henri Mayer a generation later, Armand Rousseau's wines found a loyal clientele through the wine lists of these gastronomic temples. In 1954 Monsieur Rousseau purchased the domaine's parcel in Clos St. Jacques from the Comte de Moucheron, adding yet another crown jewel to his fine roster of vineyard holdings.

Charles Rousseau had completed his studies at the University of Dijon in 1945 (studying both Law and Oenology) and came to work alongside of his father at the domaine from that time forward, but, as mentioned above, the transition from father to son was sudden. At the time of his father's tragic passing, Charles Rousseau inherited an estate that had grown to just over six hectares of vines and already had parcels in some of Gevrey's and Morey's finest grand crus and premier crus, but Charles was quick to follow in his father's footsteps and add to the family's vineyard patrimony as opportunity presented itself. These new purchases included plots in Chambertin "Clos de Bèze" on two occasions (1961 for the original piece and more from Domaine Marion in 1989), additional plots in Chambertin in 1968, 1983 and again in 1990, and as mentioned above, he was the prime mover in the purchase of the extensive Domaine Thomas-Bassot holdings in Ruchottes-Chambertin in 1977, which allowed the domaine to acquire the *monopole* of the Clos des Ruchottes. Due to this insight, Domaine Rousseau now encompasses just over fifteen hectares of vineyard land, including fully eight hectares of vines in Grand Cru in Gevrey-Chambertin and Morey St. Denis; these grand cru parcels include two and a half hectares in Chambertin, 1.48 hectares in Clos de Bèze, as well as half a hectare in Mazy-Chambertin, nearly one and a half hectares in both Clos de la Roche and Charmes-Chambertin (with the family's vines in both Charmes *vrais* and Mazoyrès), and the abovementioned entirety of the Clos des Ruchottes. The Rousseaus are also one of only five owners in the beautiful premier cru of Clos St. Jacques, possessing just over two hectares here (forty percent of the vineyard's acreage), as well as excellent plots of vines in Lavaux St. Jacques and Cazetiers. There are also a handful of vines in other premier crus, such as Clos Prieur, Estournelles St. Jacques and Craipillots, which contribute to the estate's excellent Gevrey-Chambertin *villages* cuvée.

I was fortunate to meet Charles Rousseau on my very first visit to Burgundy and have been welcomed here over the years as each new generation has taken their places at the helm of the family domaine. Much as has been the case at Domaine Lafarge, Domaine Rousseau has a long history of one generation working alongside of the next, sharing their experience in the vineyards and cellars and ensuring that the excellence of the wines here only improves with each passing year. Eric Rousseau, Charles' son, joined his father full-time working at the domaine in 1982, after receiving his degree in oenology and working for a few years with merchants and *négociants* to learn more about the trade. He took over primary responsibility for the vineyards of the domaine, introducing techniques such as green harvesting and moved the estate toward organic viticulture and away from the petro-chemical treatments that had been utilized at times during his father's era. Charles Rousseau had been the head of the growers' association for the

village of Gevrey-Chambertin for much of his career, and one of the viticultural consultants employed by the association had urged *vignerons* to replenish their soils with additions of potassium after each harvest. As the leaders in the village association, Domaine Rousseau had dutifully followed the recommendation, with the result that eventually their soils became too alkaline from all of the potassium additions, which led to problems of stability of the wines in bottle in a couple of vintages here in 1978 and 1979. Much of Eric's early viticultural efforts here revolved around correcting for this problem, though mostly what was required was long patience as the pH of the soils finally started to correct itself once the potassium additions had been stopped. Since 2014, Eric has been joined at Domaine Rousseau by his daughter, Cyrielle Rousseau, continuing the tradition of two generations of the family working side by side at the domaine and the wines have never been better than they are today.

Charles Rousseau was a multi-talented *vigneron* during his days at the head of the family domaine. Completely fluent in French, English and German, he was able to greatly expand Domaine Rousseau's presence in export markets. His father, Armand, had begun exporting his bottled wines to the United States as early as the late 1930s, working with the legendary Colonel Frederick Wildman at that time, and Charles was able to add importers for the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and eventually, the rest of Europe and much of Asia over the course of his long career. He was a very warm and gracious host at tastings at the domaine, generously sharing his time and his wines with even young members of the wine trade such as myself in those early days. I will never forget that he sold me a bottle of his 1988 Chambertin (for the French franc equivalent of about \$35) after my first visit in the spring of 1991, which I still had in my cellar up until a few years ago (when my self-control finally gave way and I happily drank the bottle). On my first visit to the estate I had the opportunity to taste the "new and improved" Domaine Rousseau Clos de Bèze, as Charles had just purchased a fine parcel of vines from the Domaine Marion in this grand cru after the 1988 harvest, and the blend of the new parcel's fruit to the domaine's previous holdings here had added a sense of flamboyance to the 1989 Clos de Bèze that continues to define this bottling *chez* Rousseau to this day.

Like Henri Jayer, Charles Rousseau was a *vigneron* who made exceptional wines in every vintage, not just in the best of years. As I mentioned above, there was a brief time where the wines were adversely affected by all of those potassium additions out in the vines, so that both 1978 and 1979 were not always up to the extremely high standards of the domaine, but Charles was able to correct this by acidulating his wines for a brief period beginning in 1980, so that I have had the great pleasure to drink superb wines from Domaine Rousseau in vintages such as 1980, 1982, 1983, 1986 and 1987 whose quality clearly transcended the general level of their respective vintages. I should also mention that I had a beautiful bottle of his 1978 Chambertin a few years back that had no issues and was as beautiful as one could hope it to be, so obviously not every bottle of the '78s and '79s *chez* Rousseau were problematic. Probably the finest bout of good luck I had during my merchant days was with Charles Rousseau's beautiful 1987 wines, which had backed up in his importer's pipeline as the more highly-touted 1988s, 1989s and 1990s arrived, and eventually the 1987s were offered at steep discounts while I was still a wine merchant in New York in the early 1990s. It is hard to imagine this in today's market, but I was able to sell more than a hundred cases of the domaine's 1987s at marvelously low prices to my clients (1987 Chambertin and Clos de Bèze were both \$40 per bottle!). As I mentioned above, the Burgundy market was very different back in those days. Needless to say, I have drunk more

1987 Domaine Rousseau wines than any other vintage! I have also had the very good fortune to drink wines from Charles Rousseau's earliest days at the head of the family domaine, as I have been lucky to buy and drink his '66, '71 and '72 Clos de Bèze, '64, '69 and '71 Chambertin, as well as the 1971 Clos St. Jacques and can happily report that he hit the ground running in his first decade at the head of the domaine. Having been lucky enough to share in a few bottles from his father's era as well, (1919 and 1949 Chambertin), it is easy to see the continuity of excellence that has defined the Rousseau family's wines from generation to generation, and this characteristic has certainly continued on through Eric Rousseau's time at the head of the family estate and seems poised to do so as well when he retires and passes on the baton to his talented daughter Cyrielle. Which, I have to imagine, is exactly how Armand Rousseau would have liked it.



Charles Rousseau with a VFTC subscriber when our tasting paths crossed at Domaine Rousseau back in 2012.

Jean-François Coche is yet another of the legendary winegrowers in Burgundy who I have been fortunate to get to know during my time visiting the region, and I have drunk so many of his beautiful wines over the years that I am almost embarrassed to count them up. Much like the wines of Henri Mayer during his lifetime, the wines from Monsieur Coche's Domaine Coche-Dury were rather difficult to come by in the US market during much of my career, but were readily available on many of the wine lists of restaurants I was able to dine at in France during this same period of time, so it became incumbent upon our small circle of Burgundy lovers to try

and drink his wines whenever we could find them while dining out in France. I did not have the opportunity to visit Jean-François Coche as early on in my travels to the region as many of the other *vignerons* who figure in this article, but I eventually want to work for a fine wine broker based in Switzerland in the mid-1990s, who already had a very good relationship with Monsieur Coche, so I was blessed with the possibility to visit and taste in the family's cellars in Meursault on every trip I took to Burgundy while working with this small company. Given that the owner of the Swiss company's absolute favorite white Burgundy producer happened to be Jean-François Coche, we also shared many a bottle of the domaine's wines at dinners and tastings while I was fortunate to work with him and my depth of experience with the Domaine Coche-Dury wines truly dates from this period in my career.

Domaine Coche-Dury is not a particularly old domaine by Burgundian standards, as Jean-François Coche inherited a third of his family's vines from his father, Georges Coche, in 1973, upon the retirement of Coche *Père*. A generation earlier, Georges Coche had inherited his own parcels of vines from his father Léon Coche, who started his family domaine after the First World War. The estate, as we know it today really came into being in 1975, when Jean-François Coche married his wife Odile Dury (who also brought some family vineyard parcels to the enterprise) and Jean-François changed the name of the estate to Domaine Coche-Dury. For all of George Coche's tenure, the vast, vast majority of production here was sold off to *négociants*, but he began to make and bottle a bit of his wines himself in the latter years of his career for private clients, and Jean-François incrementally increased the amount of wine that he bottled and sold directly as the years went by from 1973 onwards. However, I can still vividly recall my conversations with Jean-François Coche during my early visits to taste at the domaine back in the mid-1990s, when he was already one of the most famous white Burgundy producers in the world, and I asked him why he continued to sell a percentage of his production off to *négociants*, as by then he had more than sufficient demand to sell every single drop of his wine in bottle. Monsieur Coche replied that "the *négociants* were there for us when we needed them to sell the wines, and it would be unfaithful to immediately turn our backs on them when we have more demand from our private clients for our wines in bottle."

Jean-François Coche was joined at the domaine by his son, Raphaël Coche in 1999, and the two generations worked side by side for a bit more than a decade, before Jean-François Coche reached the age of retirement in 2010. Though he is now officially retired, I often encounter Jean-François, still at the top of his game, coming in from working out in the vines when I arrive for my tastings at the domaine, and I suspect that much like with Michel Lafarge, it will be a long time still before he truly "retires" and stops helping out at the domaine. The winemaking of the Coche family's white wines has been quite constant since Jean-François' earliest days in the 1970s, with the wines fermented with indigenous yeasts and given a fairly leisurely cask *elevage* of ten months prior to their first racking- typically in July following the vintage. The wines are then returned to barrel for another four months of *elevage* prior to being fined (in anticipation of their eventual *mise*), and then bottled cask by cask after another six months of settling in after their fining. The wines are not filtered. This is a fairly long *elevage* of twenty months in barrel, which is quite different from an estate such as Domaine Guy Roulot, where the wines are assembled in stainless steel tanks after their first racking and complete their last several months of *elevage* in tank, rather than being returned to barrel. Jean-François Coche was famous during his time at the helm of the family domaine for being one of the more

reductive white winemakers in the Côte de Beaune, and his son Raphaël has continued this tradition. In my experience, and I have been fortunate enough to have drunk the domaine's wines since the vintages of the early 1980s, the tendency to bottle the wines here in a slightly more reductive state than many of their neighbors allows the Domaine Coche-Dury white wines to evolve at a very relaxed pace in bottle and endows them with exceptionally long lives. This gently reductive style often gives the white wines from Coche-Dury a touch of iodine or flintiness on both the nose and palate and is a signature tone in the family's white wines. The more reductive style of the Domaine Coche-Dury wines was particularly evident *vis à vis* those of their neighbors in the decades of the 1980s and early 1990s, before many more producers in the Côte de Beaune began following the lead of the Coche family and bottling a bit more reductively in this century in a hope of using this technique to tame the hydra of premature oxidation.

The domaine has expanded over the years and today, Raphaël Coche farms just over nine hectares of vines, spread amongst the villages of Meursault, Auxey-Duresses, Monthélie, Puligny-Montrachet, Volnay and Aloxe-Corton, where they produce their legendary version of Corton-Charlemagne. Domaine Coche-Dury is far more famous for the stunning quality of their white wines, but they also make some of the very best red wines in the Côte de Beaune. The family solely produces red wines from their holdings in Auxey-Duresses and Monthélie, which are both outstanding and at one time happened to be some of the finest red wines values found in the entire firmament of Burgundy. The Coche family also continues to produce a Meursault *rouge* bottling, which has become extremely rare in this era, as it is so much easier to sell white Meursault in the market than a red wine from the village. But, like their reds from Auxey and Monthélie, the Meursault *rouge* here is an outstanding and a very ageworthy bottle of pinot noir. The domaine's finest red wine cuvée is their Volnay "Premier Cru", which is made from equal parts of Taillepieds and Clos des Chênes. The only vintage where I understand that Monsieur Coche decided to not blend the two parcels together was in 1999, where the combination of the exceptional quality of the vintage and the very generous cropload made it possible to bottle each parcel separately (though both were simply labeled with the domaine's Volnay "Premier Cru" label and only the family knows which premier cru one might have in their cellars.) There was once a Pommard also produced *chez* Coche for a handful of vintages in the last decade, but these vines were exchanged for a bit more *ares* in Corton-Charlemagne back in 2014, so the last vintage produced of the Coche Pommard was in 2013.

During his long career, Jean-François Coche, despite how beautiful his red wines were each year, was far more famous for the stunning quality of his white wines. Like many of the other *vignerons* featured in this article, his wines were highly sought after by the very best Michelin-starred restaurants in France throughout his career, and this continues on to this day, with Raphaël Coche having now taken the reins of the domaine in hand and continuing to craft exquisite wines. A great many of the Domaine Coche-Dury wines that I have been lucky enough to drink over the course of my career were enjoyed on wine lists in restaurants throughout Burgundy and in Paris. From very early on in his career, Jean-François Coche was famous for the quality of each and every white wine bottling he produced, with his Aligoté and Bourgogne Blanc often considered the very finest examples to be found in Burgundy from their respective levels. His Meursault *villages* bottling was always of top premier cru quality, and though the family has holdings in several different *lieux à dits* in the commune, the only two that were

bottled and labeled with the name of the vineyard parcel on them were the family's les Chevaliers and les Rougeots. However, Jean-François Coche also had plots of vines in the vineyards of Vireuils, Tillets and Luchets, which he did not label as such and simply sold under a straight Meursault label. However, his preference to bottle cask by cask meant that each of these other three *lieux à dits* were also bottled on their own, and one could get a different *villages* level Meursault from place to place, depending on which cuvée was traditionally given to a particular importer or restaurant. As all were excellent wines, it was really more a difference of variations in *terroir* in each wine, rather than one bottling being superior to another. I do not know if Raphaël Coche has continued this particular tradition at the domaine, but I imagine that he has with the Meursault AC bottling.



Jean-François and Raphaël Coche back in 2018, after our vertical tasting of Corton-Charlemagne.

Beyond the superb range of Meursault *lieux à dits* in the Coche-Dury portfolio, the domaine also produces a Puligny-Montrachet *villages* level wines from the vineyard of les Enseignères. These vines lie right on the border between Chassagne and Puligny, with Domaine Sauzet's Chassagne-Montrachet AC bottling hailing from this same vineyard, just over the communal boundary and next to those of Domaine Coche-Dury. I have often thought it would make a very interesting vertical tasting to compare these two wines side by side over several vintages. The Coche family also produces three different Meursault premier cru bottlings these days, which are les Caillerets (made from predominantly *terres rouges* soils), les Genevrières and les Perrières. The les Caillerets is a beautiful wine, but due to its quite unique soil composition in the lineup of the other Coche family Meursaults, it is a bit of a stylistic outlier

and in some vintages I have had a preference for the les Chevaliers or les Rougeots bottlings, even though they are not premier crus. However, the Genevrières and Perrières here are two of Burgundy's greatest white wine bottlings, with both exceptional examples of their respective *terroirs* and truly magical, long-lived wines. The crown jewel here is of course, the domaine's example of Corton-Charlemagne, which I wrote about in a vertical report back in the spring of 2018. It is produced primarily from a sixty *ares* parcel of vines in the *lieu à dit* of le Charlemagne, located high up on the slope, and right alongside of the vines of Domaine Michel Juillot. In fact, the Coche and Juillot families actually split a larger parcel of vines back in the mid-1980s, when the original owner decided to sharecrop his vines for a period of time and split his plot between the two families. The Coches eventually purchased their share of these vines.

The first vintage ever produced of Domaine Coche-Dury's Corton-Charlemagne was in the 1986 vintage, which I was very fortunate enough to taste at a friend's home back in the early 1990s. This ever-studious collector had managed to buy a full case of Jean-François Coche's inaugural vintage of Corton-Charlemagne! As I mentioned in my article on this wine, the 1986 was truly stunning to drink at that time, but this is the exception to the rule (due to the fairly generous botrytis found in many of the 1986 white Burgundies which made them drink extremely well from a young age), as it was delicious early, whereas most vintages of Coche-Dury Corton-Charlemagne demand at least a full decade's worth of bottle age before they start to unwind. The other Coche family white wines are also very long-lived and start out life properly structured, so I would not open either the Genevrières or Perrières *chez* Coche until it too was at least ten years of age, and even the *lieux à dits* bottlings are far better with some significant bottle age. I have even had the pleasure to drink the family's Bourgogne Blanc at twenty years of age and it too is superb with time in the cellar and lasts far longer than many would imagine. Though Jean-François Coche has now been officially retired for a decade, he continues to be one of the legendary winegrowers of his generation in the Côte d'Or and there is little doubt that he set as fine an example of uncompromising excellence, hence setting the table for today's Burgundy renaissance, as any of these other legendary characters featured in this piece on the recent history of the region.

Jacques Lardière is another of the great winemakers of Burgundy who has now retired, but who I was able to get to know quite well during my visits to the region. Unlike all of the other producers featured in this report, Monsieur Lardière was not a small, independent winegrower, but rather, he was in charge of the winemaking at one of the most important, quality-conscious, large *négociants* of Burgundy, Maison Louis Jadot. He was also from a different generation than many of the producers featured here (other than Monsieur Coche), as he was a "baby boomer", having taken over as head winemaker at Maison Jadot in the difficult 1971 vintage. Today, many of us look back on the 1971s as a great year for red Burgundy, which it certainly was in the Côte de Nuits, but it was a hail vintage in the Côte de Beaune and Jacques' fine hand mitigating the hail taint in Maison Jadot's 1971 Côte de Beaune red wines was a major factor in André Gagey deciding to hand over the winemaking at the *négociant* to Jacques and "move upstairs" into the chief administrative role for the company. Jacques Lardière had arrived the year before, in 1970, at the age of twenty-three, to assist in the cellars and was quickly to take control of the winemaking at Maison Jadot for the next forty-two years. He retired from Louis Jadot at the end of 2012, after reaching retirement age, but has continued to make wine from

Maison Jadot's relatively new Oregon wine project, Résonance Vineyards in the Willamette Valley.

Jacques Lardière is a marvelous winemaker and a very passionate champion of *terroir*, knowing intimately the finest details of the vineyard mosaic of the region, down to the minute variations of vine age, soil type, exposition of a dizzyingly huge number of vineyards throughout the Côte d'Or. Always very busy during his days at Louis Jadot, he was a dynamo of energy who was always generous with his time and a most gracious host, delighted to share his knowledge and experience for as long as the visitor could keep up with his boundless well of enthusiasm for Burgundy. During much of his career, he was more widely recognized for the beauty of the white wines he created for Maison Jadot, rather than his red wines, which he always crafted in a very structured, chewy style out of the blocks that demanded many, many years in the cellar before they really started to show their true qualities. I can still vividly recall the time in the latter 1990s that the Jadot white wines were so much more praised in the market that a good friend of mine, who is as passionate about the wines of Burgundy as anyone I know, would actually make an excuse to leave our tastings at Maison Jadot early, after we had tasted through the white wines in the cellar, so he would not have to taste the reds! But, to my palate, the true legacy of Jacques Lardière's career will always be his brilliant red wines (as delicious as the Jadot white wines were during his era), which take a very long time to blossom, but which are amazingly beautiful, complex and long-lived wines once they have finally reached their plateau of peak maturity.

Having had the good luck to attend a few tastings of very old vintages from Louis Jadot over the years, I have come to see Jacques Lardière's red winemaking style as simply a continuation of the *Maison* Jadot house style that he inherited when he moved up to the position of Technical Director for the *négociant* in 1971. Certainly the red wines that I have tasted from the house from the earlier decades of the twentieth century share a similar style to the red wines produced during Jacques' long career, with plenty of depth, soil signature and chassis of tannin, so that even Beaune premier crus at age sixty or seventy remain beautifully balanced and in their prime of life! Jacques' winemaking approach was a bit different from many of the others featured in this article, for he preferred to utilize fairly high fermentation temperatures for his red wines, so as to set the color briskly and would normally allow the wines to macerate for a bit longer than many of his contemporaries, with the wines sitting on their lees macerating for around twenty-five days, which is quite a bit longer than the prevailing custom of twelve to fifteen days on the lees. He often chose to de-stem his bunches completely, fermented solely with indigenous yeasts for his entire career, and tended to use a fair bit of new oak for many of his wines. Interestingly, Jacques would often vary the percentage of new oak each cuvée received depending on the style of the vintage- something many of his colleagues would also do- but, counter-intuitively, he would often use a bit more new oak in "lighter" vintages, reasoning that the red wines could use a bit more oak tannin to add to the structure in vintages with a bit less natural skin tannin on which to rely. For the red wine mantra at Louis Jadot was always to make long-lived wines that would beautifully display their underlying *terroirs* with the unfolding of the decades, and this was every bit as true during Monsieur Lardière's long tenure here as winemaker as it was before he took over the cellars in 1971.

Over the course of Jacques Lardière's career at Louis Jadot, the *maison* transitioned from a traditional *négociant* house primarily dependent on long-term contracts with small *vignerons* to

purchase their grapes and wine in cask, to one of the biggest landowners in all of Burgundy. The two most prominent purchases made during this time were buying the vineyards from Domaine Clair-Daü in 1985 and the vineyards of Maison Champy in 1989, which dramatically increased the vineyard patrimony at Louis Jadot. These included excellent and often sizable parcels in vineyards such as Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”, Musigny, Bonnes-Mares, Chapelle-Chambertin, Clos St. Jacques and les Amoureuses, as well as a dizzyingly broad swath of prime Côte de Beaune vineyards. Towards the end of Jacques’ career, Maison Jadot also bought the superb vineyard holdings from the Germain family at the Château de Chorey-lès-Beaune, further adding to the myriad of great premier cru vineyards in the commune of Beaune with which the winemaking team at Jadot could draw upon. One of the things that always impressed me about Jacques’ passion for Burgundy was that he never became primarily interested in only the greatest vineyard jewels in the Jadot portfolio, but lovingly crafted each and every bottling that would wear the Louis Jadot label, and we would often spend hours down in the cellars tasting wines and discussing less well-known vineyards such as Monthélie’s beautiful premier cru of Champs Fulliot, which abuts the lower section of the Clos des Chênes in neighboring Volnay and shares a great many soil similarities, but which is far more obscure to most Burgundy lovers than the Clos des Chênes. Typically emblematic of Jacques Lardière’s tenure here, we would often spend time tasting a range of premier cru casks, while Jacques commented that “these will all be blended into the *villages* cuvées, just to make better examples, but I thought you might be interested in tasting them before we blend them in.”

One of my favorite philosophical tenets of Jacques Lardière revolves around his concept of “energy” in a wine and how to best safeguard this characteristic to ensure a long and fruitful life for the wine in bottle. Jacques used to wax eloquent about how he viewed a wine as the summation of its growing season’s energy and its respective mineral footprint from its *terroir*, all captured within the framework of the grape and eventually finding its way into the bottled wine- if the winemaker could stay out of the way! Towards the end of his career, it became widely popular to also consider the “energy lines” that ran underneath the vineyards of Burgundy and how these too played a significant role in shaping the resulting wines produced from each parcel; needless to say this viewpoint strongly dovetailed with Jacques’ already existing intellectual framework of winegrowing. He viewed his role as winemaker as being the one responsible for capturing as much of the sun’s and earth’s energy from a particular summer in the finished wine, so that it could harness this over its many decades in the bottle to retain its vitality while it blossomed and grew with extended cellaring. Often Jacques would stand in the dimly-lit cellars at Louis Jadot, holding court on these precepts, while twisting his hands skyward in a corkscrew fashion to symbolize the energy core of the wine spiraling up towards the heavens as it aged fifty, sixty or seventy years in bottle and got better and better and better with each passing year. And then he would spin on his heel, laugh and say, “let’s taste another wine!”

Towards the last half dozen years or so of Jacques’ tenure at Maison Jadot, I finally got my act together and started scheduling two appointments on each trip to taste the new vintage here- one for white wines and one for red wines. I would schedule each tasting for the mid-afternoon and clear the rest of the day, to afford enough time to enjoy the philosophical conversations with Monsieur Lardière and ensure that another *rendez-vous* would not preclude our tasting something important in the cellars to try to stay on schedule. I am sure that the relative lack of affection that Jacques’ talented successor, Frédéric Barnier, has for me today

dates back to some of these often quite long tastings, as he would have to spend several hours with us (as Jacques' assistant and heir apparent at the time) in the cellar prior to finally giving up the ghost and climbing the stairs to escape from the continued prospects of tasting so many of the more obscure cuvées in the cellar. But, for me, these were some of the best tastings of my many trips to Burgundy, as I was able to learn so much listening to Monsieur Lardière and tasting many of the small-batch bottlings in the Maison Jadot cellars, or trying all those lovely premier crus that would eventually end up being the heart and soul of their respective village wine bottlings. They were magical moments, where time seemed to stand still (except for the aggrieved Monsieur Barnier) and the Burgundian universe dazzled with each and every star that rose in the next glass of wine.



Jacques Lardière out in the vineyards, a couple of years before his retirement.

There have been many other legends patrolling their cellars in Burgundy during my thirty-plus years visiting the region, who I never had the opportunity to get to know as well as many of the *vignerons* featured in the pages above. Some of these, such as Robert Drouhin of Maison Joseph Drouhin, had children of the same generation as myself and it was much more natural for my visits to be hosted by Véronique Drouhin when I started to taste in the cellars here, rather than for Monsieur Drouhin to do so himself. Similarly, I never really got to know people like Jean-Marie Roumier or Louis Trapet during my early years tasting in the Burgundian cellars (though I did have the pleasure to meet them), as their children were also approximately my age and I would taste with Christophe Roumier or Jean-Louis Trapet instead during my trips to the region. At other domaines, though I would visit regularly, the tastings were often conducted in a more perfunctory fashion (as would be understandable to get the young,

greenhorn American merchant out of the cellars so that more important work could be accomplished by the winery team), and I never had the same personal connections forged during my visits to places such as Domaine Leflaive or Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, though I visited both estates often in my early years tasting in the cellars of Burgundy. As I mentioned at the outset of this article, back in this era, the Burgundy trade was very much based on personal relationships, so if an importer was more grudgingly inclined to assist in making an appointment to taste at a particular domaine, this would be quite evident to the proprietor and less time and attention would subsequently be extended during the visits. It was just the way things were at that time. But, looking back from thirty years of tasting in the cellars of Burgundy, it is rather remarkable how many of the “greats” of Burgundy’s recent history I was fortunate enough to taste with and I wanted to devote some time highlighting their important historical contributions to the world of Burgundy that we know today. For, there is little doubt that it might have been a far less marvelous history if these people had not been so devoted to seeing their region and its beautiful wines handed a rock solid foundation upon which future generations could build. As Bob Dylan might have said, like a ladder to the stars.

**THE SUPERB, CLASSICAL 2020 VINTAGE IN GERMANY
AS WELL AS A HANDFUL OF LATER-RELEASED 2019ERS**



I cannot really believe how long it has taken me to write this report on the 2020 vintage in Germany, but this is of course the first of the pandemic vintages and why should anyone expect it to be routine in any way, shape or form! When I think of all the difficulties that had to be overcome by winegrowers throughout the world during the first several months of the global Covid crisis, when lockdowns and frenzied attempts to hold the virus at bay complicated every facet of life, it is really quite amazing that there is any vintage to report on at all, and yet 2020 managed to produce some truly amazing wines around the globe. Let us take it as a sign that we will eventually overcome the challenge of Covid completely and find our way back to a better way of life than we are currently experiencing. I remember exchanging news with Andrea and Christophe Schaefer in Graach in the early summer of 2020, when Covid was first starting to reshape the entire world's fabric of life, and Andrea mentioned that "in a way, we are lucky here on the Mosel, as we can still tend our vines, go out in the fresh air and keep a bit of normal life for ourselves and our children, which those in the cities cannot do." At the time Germany, and much of Europe, was in a strict lockdown, the morgues were filling up with victims of the virus across the entire globe, and the mystery that surrounded Covid gave everything the feel of Armageddon, and I truly envied those who had their vineyards to tend to keep them grounded a bit in what was the normalcy of life before the pandemic.

Here it is now more than a year and a half later and the world is still a far cry from “back to normal”, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine pushing the continuing battle against Covid off of Twitter and the front pages of the newspapers, but hardly an improvement from those early, fearful days of the pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020. But, at least we now have a vintage to report on and it is a very, very beautiful vintage in Germany. This article that follows is not anywhere near its customary size or shape, as of course, the never-ending pandemic precluded my travelling to taste the new vintage in the spring of 2021 and I had to be content to ask winegrowers if they could send samples of their finished 2020ers once they had been bottled and were ready for shipping. A great many producers kindly sent me a range of samples, upon which this article is based, but unfortunately, several of the estates’ samples that were sent managed to vanish along the way in transit in a quite unprecedented manner, so some of my favorite producers, such as the aforementioned Weingut Willi Schaefer in Graach, are not covered in the pages that follow. But, despite all of the vagaries of virus, economic uncertainty and shipping waywardness, somehow, I have finally managed to taste a goodly range of 2020ers and can get this report sent out while many of the wines still remain widely available in the market, as the same misdirected shipping forces that devoured a significant number of my samples has also slowed down the arrival of the 2020ers in many of the markets around the globe.

The 2020 vintage in Germany is a beautiful, classically pure and filigreed vintage of bright acids and great mineral drive. Like its counterpart in Burgundy, the growing season was out of the blocks very early, due to a freakishly warm early spring (or at least these very warm springs were out of the ordinary a decade or more ago- perhaps they are more typical of our climate crisis these days and almost not worthy of mention anymore) that got the sap rising in the vines and the growing season off to an early start. Generally, everything started growing two weeks early in 2020. This accelerated trend would continue all the way up to harvest, with early flowering and a correspondingly early start to picking, as there was nothing about the hot and dry summer weather that put the brakes on the vintage and the grapes were ready for picking in mid-September this year. Which is very early by traditional German wine country standards, where picking used to always take place in the latter half of October. However, whereas the previous year of 2019 had been blessed by truly great weather at the backend of the picking, after a bit of rain in the middle, the 2020 harvest was quite different once growers started bringing in their bunches, as the weather all of a sudden turned cool and damp and ripening was effectively stopped just as everyone got rolling picking! This allowed sugar levels to stay fairly modest for our era of global warming, acidity levels stayed nice and high (though most of the acidity is tartaric this year) and very little botrytis was found in the vintage, so Auslesen are relatively rare in 2020. As there was also a period of rain during the harvest of 2020, which growers had to work around if they could, picking was tricky just from a meteorological point of view, and one still had to contend with taking extreme precautions against Covid as well for the harvesters.

Winter leading into the growing season of 2020 had been very mild, but happily, February was at least quite rainy, so that groundwater reserves could be stocked up against the coming summer months. The early spring of 2020 was very warm in German wine country, with March setting records for high temperatures and the sap rising in the vines and budbreak was very early this year. Happily, April frost damage, which was so devastating in other parts of Europe, was not a major problem in German vineyards, so that the vines happily got a head start

into summer and benefited from the warm, sunny weather up to the start of May. However, by the backend end of May the weather had taken a decidedly different course, turning wet and cool and the early June flowering was upset by the unsettled weather, adversely affecting some vineyards. The pandemic was also in full force by May of 2020, shutting down borders and limiting seasonal workers, so that larger estates that normally have the benefit of additional workers from Eastern Europe had to do all the vineyard work themselves in the summer of 2020. Social distancing, frequent testing, mask wearing and all the other things we have gotten accustomed to during this long pandemic were required for vineyard work in the summer of 2020, but everyone adapted as best they could and the work got done under sunny skies through mid-summer. July's temperatures were pretty typical throughout German wine country, but the month of August saw some record-setting heat spikes which further complicated the growing season. Also, as was the case in Burgundy in 2020, the second half of the summer in Germany was marked by drought conditions, which slowed the vegetative cycles of the vines a bit as hydric stress started to become an issue. There was some precipitation in August in German wine country, but mostly it arrived in the form of thunderstorms which ran off of the hillsides often quicker than it could be absorbed into the parched soils, so they were nowhere near as beneficial as they might have been if the rainfall had occurred in a more gentle pattern.

The combination of problems at flowering in early June and the variations of ripeness brought about by hydric stress (where vines at the top of the slopes struggled to ripen at the same pace as those further down, where some of the August rainfall could be captured in the soils) led to a bit of heterogeneous ripening of the bunches out in the vineyards. This would require vigilance at harvest time, to make sure that parcels of vines were cleared when they were properly ripe and systematic gathering of the bunches had to give way to flexibility. However, even with the drought conditions and the imperfect relief brought by the thunderstorms that fell in August, the very early start to the growing season back in the unseasonably warm weather of March and April was not given back through the summer months and growers starting anticipating a mid-September and record early start to the harvest in 2020. This was indeed the case and most estates were out gathering grapes to make Kabinett by the middle of September, anticipating perhaps waiting a bit after this first round of picking to come back to gather bunches with higher sugar levels, as had been the case in 2019, where the beautiful Indian Summer weather had watched the sugars soar over the course of the picking. But, this did not happen again in 2020, as the weather turned cold, grey and wet on the Mosel, with on again and off again showers interspersed with perpetual grey skies and sugars essentially just stopped where they had been at the very start of picking!

Klaus-Peter Keller over in the Hügelland sector of the Rheinhessen reports that harvest weather was better there than on the Mosel, "with almost perfect weather conditions in September and the start of October" allowing for their Rheinhessen vineyards to be brought in at the optimal moment and with the grapes in perfect condition. During the most intensely rainy period of the harvest on the Mosel, many growers stopped picking completely and either worked on the foliage of their vines, or picked grapes that would end up in their most basic entry level wines, as the forecast was for drier weather again after those few days of rain. Once the rain stopped, producers were able to start gathering better quality grapes again with which they could make their higher grade dry bottlings and Spätlese, though one must remember that sugars did not really rise all that much over the course of the three weeks of picking in 2020, as the

temperatures stayed quite cool. There was also very little botrytis in 2020, as the cool conditions did not allow for the formation of noble rot in the vines and there is not much Auslesen this year. Additionally, the grapes had soaked up water from the rains, which prevented the concentration of sugars and acids through botrytis or basic dehydration, as the grapes plumped up again after the dry conditions of August and early September, which not only helped prevent the spread of botrytis, but also diluted the juice a bit and eventually produced generally lighter-styled wines in 2020. So, we have a throwback vintage on the Mosel where Oechsle levels are often a reminiscent of pre-global warming vintages of the 1980s and early 1990s. I have heard several comparisons as well to the lovely, filigreed vintage of 2002 when discussing the style of the 2020ers, and this seems quite accurate to me in many ways.

So, what are the wines like in 2020? Starting with the dry bottlings, they are generally a bit lower in octane than we have routinely seen in the last fifteen or twenty years, and this is all to the good to my palate, as the wines lack for nothing and show a degree of early elegance out of the blocks that is not always as evident in the young wines when they are a point higher in alcohol and a bit more muscle-bound in their collective youths. With the acids seeming a bit more gentle in many of these young Trocken bottlings, due to the preponderance of tartaric acidity this year, there is not always the same snap on the backend of the young wines, but as one spends some time with them in the glass, it becomes quite apparent that there is no shortage of acidity in this vintage. At least this is certainly the case for the top estates and the higher level bottlings, though I have heard reports of some of the lower level bottlings from some middle tier estates (particularly larger ones) showing a bit soft and dilute from having been made from bunches gathered during the rains in the middle of the Mosel picking window. But, I have not really tasted many of these types of wines. 2020 is also a vintage that is absolutely marvelous for both Kabinetten and Spätlesen, which are the German wines I drink with the most frequency from my own cellar these days, showing that even though my cellar is starting to get a fine selection of dry Rieslings in its makeup, my palate preferences forged in the vintages of the early 1980s is still tilted towards these lower Prädikat wines. And 2020 is certainly a treasure trove for those who like Kabinetten and Spätlesen! As Klaus-Peter Keller notes, “We simply cannot remember ever harvesting such beautiful Kabinett grapes.” I am sorry that I only had the chance to taste one of the Keller family’s Kabinetten from 2020, as I was limited to a dozen sample bottles (and which of the GGs are you going to ask to be taken out to taste more Kabinetten?), but at least I had the chance to taste the Schubertslay Kabinett!

At the Spätlese level, some of the very finest wines of the vintage are to be found. What Katarina Prüm has managed to coax from the beautiful slate soils of her vineyards at the Spätlese level are truly among the finest young Riesling I have ever had the pleasure to taste and are as strong a testament to the enormous potential that this Prädikat level had in 2020 as one could ever hope to come across. There are also truly stunning Spätlesen from many of the other estates covered in the pages that follow, as this was a vintage where the *fin de saison* weather really favoured this Prädikat level. The small handful of Auslesen that I have tasted have also been stellar in quality, with the wines from Thomas Haag at Schloss Lieser and again, Katarina Prüm standing out for special mention. So, despite all of the myriad of challenges facing winegrowers during the first year of the Covid pandemic in 2020, the vintage has turned out beautifully and has produced hundreds and hundreds of simply superb wines. There is an almost tranquil nature to the finest 2020ers, as their inherent elegance and refined aesthetic sensibilities are seemingly a

perfect salve for the world's open wound that has existed since the start of the pandemic. Maybe in the future, when better days return, we can pull a few bottles of beautiful 2020ers out of our cellars and look back and think "it was not all bad in 2020". The following notes are organized geographically, starting in the Saar and Ruwer, moving on into the Mosel Valley and then onto the Nahe, Rheingau, Rheinpfalz and Rheinhessen in succession. There are reviews on several estates who I do not normally get to visit on my trips to German each spring, as I figured as long as I was going to rely on samples here in New York, I might as well cast the net a bit wider and see what else is out there in the market that I have been missing. Some of the samples that arrived were not from the 2020 vintage from these producers, but as I was rather unfamiliar with the wines from several of these estates, I thought I would be just as happy to taste a 2019er or 2018er from the producer and try to discover a bit about their style of winemaking. Within each regional section, the estates are simply listed alphabetically.



Saar and Ruwer

Maximin Grünhaus (Mertesdorf)

Maximin Grünhaus' American importer kindly sent along a nice range of 2020ers from the estate to include in this feature, along with a couple of later releases from the 2019 vintage. There has been a rebranding of a few of the cuvées here in the 2020 vintage, to comply with VDP rules regarding labeling of certain wines. So, for example, the old Monopol bottling has been renamed as Schloss Riesling in 2020, and the former Alte Reben Trocken bottling is now called simply Grönhäuser Riesling Trocken. I was sorry not to have the opportunity to visit with the von

Schubert family at the estate in Mertesdorf this year, as I am uncertain of how much different the growing season was here on the Ruwer in comparison to the middle Mosel, where I have been able to receive more information about the summer and early autumn of 2020. So, I am not sure if the same issues with rain showers during harvest affected the Ruwer. In any case, there are some lovely 2020ers being released by this iconic estate, and as the winery produces I fairly large array of bottlings, I have to assume that there are other cuvées here also to be discovered from 2020. Sadly, my half bottle of 2020 Abtsberg Spätlese was not on form and I tasted it too late in the preparation for this article to request a replacement from Loosen Brothers, the von Schuberts' American importer.

2019 Pinot Blanc “Réserve” Trocken AP #30- Maximin Grünhaus

The 2019 Pinot Blanc “Réserve” from Maximin Grünhäus is a very lovely wine, with a nice sense of new oakiness that augments the pinot blanc grape quite nicely. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, peach, spring flowers, slate and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and new oaky, with a good core of fruit, sound soil signature, bright acids and good length and grip on the nascently complex finish. With air, the oak here dominates the wine a bit on the backend, so some patience will be required. This is built to age and is still quite a puppy today, so I would opt for tucking it away in the cellar for at least four or five years and really letting it blossom properly. 2026-2045+. **88.**

2020 Schloss Riesling Trocken AP #14- Maximin Grünhaus (screwcap)

The Schloss Riesling Trocken from Maximin Grünhaus is the new branding of the old Monopol bottling here. The 2020 Schloss Riesling hails from fruit taken from all three vineyards on the estate's beautiful hillside of vines, Bruderberg, Abtsberg and Herrenberg. The wine comes in at 11.5 percent octane, carries 7.8 grams of sugar and 8.2 grams per liter of acidity. The wine offers up a youthful nose of limepeel, tart pear, gentle botanicals, slate and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-bodied and nicely mineral in personality, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, slightly closed finish from its closure. With some aeration, the wine does open up nicely. 2022-2035. **88.**

2020 Grünhäuser Riesling Trocken AP #3- Maximin Grünhaus

The 2020 Grünhäuser Riesling Trocken AP #3 was formerly known as the estate's Alte Reben bottling. The wine's statistics are 11.5 percent alcohol, 7.2 grams per liter of sugar and 7.9 grams per liter of acidity. The bouquet is bright and complex, offering up scents of lime, salty slate minerality, a bit of menthol, dried flowers and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is focused, full and complex, with a fine core, lovely bounce and grip, impeccable balance and a long, promising finish. Structurally, this is already quite svelte and tasty, but a bit of bottle age will allow some of its secondary layers of complexity to start to emerge, so I would be inclined to keep it in the cellar for at least a few years. 2022-2050. **89.**

2020 Abtsberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #26- Maximin Grünhäus

The 2020 Grosses Gewächs from the Abtsberg comes in at a svelte twelve percent in this classical vintage. The wine delivers a beautifully precise and vibrant bouquet of lime, tart pear, a gorgeous base of slate, wild yeasts, salty overtones and beautiful floral aromatics of lilacs, irises and jasmine in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and cut and a long, youthfully complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is a classic 2020 GG, with elegance and a svelte personality tied to perfect balance and great potential for aging. 2028-2075+. **94.**

2020 Abtsberg Riesling Superior AP #18- Maximin Grünhäus

The 2020 Abtsberg Superior bottling, which always carries a bit more residual sweetness than a pure Trocken wine, has really found a lovely balance point in this vintage. The bouquet offers up scents of orange, lime, menthol, botanicals, a lovely base of slate, just a touch of wild yeasts and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and zesty, with quite a wide open personality out of the blocks this year, good focus and bounce and a long, complex finish. There seems to be just a hint of mid-palate dilution in the wine this year (maybe from the rainy period at harvest?), but the backend is long and shows fine lift and cut. Good juice. 2022-2050. **90.**

2020 Herrenberg Riesling Kabinett AP #4- Maximin Grünhaus

The 2020 Herrenberg Riesling Kabinett AP #4 from Maximin Grünhaus comes in at a svelte 7.5 percent octane and offers up a lovely aromatic constellation of green apple, lime peel, a beautiful base of slate, classic Herrenberg botanicals and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, focused and nicely zesty, with a fine spine of acidity, good mineral undertow, very pretty fruit tones and a long, delicate and still quite youthful finish. This is one 2020 Kabinett that I would want to tuck away in the cellar for three to five years before drinking, as this is still pretty tightly-wrapped. 2025-2060. **91+.**

2020 Abtsberg Riesling Kabinett AP #10- Maximin Grünhaus

The von Schubert family's 2020 Kabinett AP #10 from the beautiful Abtsberg vineyard also comes in at a classic 7.5 percent alcohol in this vintage. It delivers a refined, youthful bouquet of fresh lime, tart pear, salty slate minerality, citrus peel, gentle mossiness, cress, and a topnote of elder flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and bounce, zesty acids and a long, focused and complex finish. This is a slightly bigger version of Kabinett than the Herrenberg this year, but it still retains its Prädikat's aesthetic sensibilities. 2025-2065. **92.**

2020 Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese AP #11- Maximin Grünhaus

The 2020 Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese AP #11 is a really refined example of the vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and complex, jumping from the glass in a blend of lime, white cherry, slate minerality that again shows an overtly saline shading, moss, dried flowers, wild yeasts and a bit of cress in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and zesty, with a lovely core and mineral drive, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and filigreed finish. This is a lovely bottle in the making. 2022-2075. **92.**

2020 Abtsberg Riesling Auslese "Fuder Nr. 89" AP #26- Maximin Grünhaus (375 ml.)

The 2020 Abtsberg Riesling Auslese "Fuder Nr. 89" has a nice touch of botrytis to it, which had to be hard to come by in this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pineapple, yellow plum, honeycomb, a hint of caramel, dried flowers and a bit of orange zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and complex, with good acids, fine focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and zesty finish. To my palate, this is not the cleanest iteration of noble rot that one can find, as the wine is a bit deep-pitched in character and the usually crystal clear personality of the Abtsberg vineyard is a bit subsumed in its youthful blush of fruit; perhaps this will arrive with bottle age? 2028-2085. **91+?**

2018 Abtsberg Riesling Beerenauslese AP #30- Maximin Grünhaus (375 ml.)

The 2018 Abtsberg Riesling Beerenauslese from Maximin Grünhaus is a deeply glazed and exotic wine that offers up scents of apricot, orange peel, yellow plum, sultana raisin, barley sugar and just a whisper of the Abtsberg's lovely botanical signature notes. On the palate the

wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, bright acids and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. A tasty bottle of BA. 2022-2075. **93.**

2019 Pinot Noir AP #33- Maximin Grünhaus

The 2019 Pinot Noir from Maximin Grünhaus comes in at 13.5 percent and offers up a lovely, deep color in this warm vintage. Readers may recall that these pinot vines are planted in the heart of the Abtsberg vineyard, so one cannot doubt the quality of the *terroir* here committed to this relatively new project. The wine offers up a lovely bouquet this year, wafting from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, slate minerality, raw cocoa and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, young and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, good mineral drive and grip, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is the finest vintage I have yet tasted of pinot noir from the von Schubert family, but it will need some bottle age to soften up and start to drink with generosity. Fine juice. 2027-2060. **92.**

Weingut Geltz-Zilliken (Saarburg)

The Zilliken family was very thankful in 2020 to be spared from any frost damage, as the estate's vines had been hit hard by spring frosts in the previous year. The Zilliken team began picking on September 21st in 2020, which was the earliest start to a harvest ever on record for this great Saarburg estate. It was three days earlier than the 2018 harvest, which held its record as the earliest start to picking ever at the estate for only two years! Such is our world under global warming. The 2020 vintage is one that favored Kabinett and Spätlese in its climactic conditions, so this is what the Zilliken family primarily produced in this vintage and the wines have turned out beautifully, with the filigreed excellence and lightness of step of yesteryear. There is nothing here of a higher Prädikat than the regular Rausch Spätlese this year. The 2020ers from the Zilliken family are beautifully refined wines, with an understated style that harkens back to the 2002 wines here, when Hanno Zilliken made some of my favorite wines from the vintage. These 2020ers will start out life tightly-knit and fairly reticent in personality, but if they follow the pattern of the 2002ers here, they will blossom beautifully with bottle age. In addition to a range of 2020ers from the estate, I also had the great pleasure to taste the stunning 2018 Grosses Gewächs bottling from the Auf der Rausch section of that grand cru vineyard, which was only first made in the 2018 vintage, due to the year providing such perfect harvesting conditions for producing Trocken wines in Saarburg. I had tasted the wine back in March of 2019, when it was still very much a baby, but it has now been released and is a truly stunning bottle of dry Saar Riesling and very much worth a special effort to find in the market and tuck away in the cellar.

2020 Saarburg Riesling Trocken Alte Reben AP #11 - Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

The 2020 Saarburg Riesling Trocken Alte Reben from Dorothee Zilliken is made from vines that range from sixty to fully one hundred and thirty years of age! The wine comes in at 11.5 percent alcohol and carries 7.5 grams of sugar and 7.5 grams of acidity. It delivers a vibrant bouquet of lemon, fresh pineapple, green apple, a complex base of slate, elder flowers, citrus peel and a touch of lemongrass in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and grip, lovely focus and a long, complex finish. This is a very stylish wine that is quite approachable today, but still fairly primary in personality and a bit of cellaring time will allow its secondary layers of complexity to emerge. Good juice. 2022-2050. **90.**

2018 Auf der Rausch Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP# 15-20- Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

I had the chance to taste this wine in its infancy back in March of 2019, on my last visit to the estate in Saarburg. This was the first time that the Zilliken family had chosen to bottle a special GG from the Auf der Rausch section of this vineyard, which is a from a special subsection of the Rausch that has a unique soil composition of Diabas (green basalt) and grey slate that stands it apart from the rest of the vineyard. The Zillikens aged this wine fully two years on its fine lees in *fuder*, so it is only being released now. The wine comes in at eleven percent alcohol and delivers a beautifully refined, youthful bouquet of grapefruit, lemon, citrus peel, elder flowers, lemongrass, wild yeasts and a gorgeously complex base of minerality, incipient Rausch smokiness and a topnote of classical Rausch botanicals. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with laser-like focus and grip, beautiful mineral undertow, superb complexity and a very, very long, seamlessly balanced and electric finish. This is a breathtakingly beautiful wine, but it is still very young and will need extended cellaring to fully unfold. To my palate, this is the greatest dry Riesling (to date) ever produced by the Zilliken family! 2030-2085. **96.**



2020 Butterfly Riesling AP# 9- Weingut Geltz-Zilliken (screwcap)

The 2020 vintage of the Zilliken family's Butterfly bottling is once again an absolute charmer. The wine is eleven percent in alcohol this year, was finished with 17.8 grams of residual sugar and carries 7.5 grams per liter of acidity. It delivers a lovely nose of lemon, tart

pineapple, a nice base of slate, spring flowers and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, bright and juicy, with lovely balance and grip, fine focus and sneaky length on the well-balanced finish. This is the ultimate everyday Saar Riesling! 2022-2035. **89.**

2020 Estate Riesling AP# 6- Weingut Geltz-Zilliken (screwcap)

The 2020 Estate Riesling is a fair bit sweeter than the Butterfly this year from Weingut Zilliken, but with its combination of good acidity and classic Saar minerality, the wine is perfectly balanced at its nine percent alcohol this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of fresh pineapple, lemon, a touch of fresh mint, white flowers, a lovely base of salty slate and a bit of lilac in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and filigreed, with Spätlese-like sweetness levels, lovely soil signature and bounce, ripe acids and a long, complex, vibrant and simply delicious finish. This bottling ended up carrying 39.6 grams of sugar and 7.3 grams of acidity, but with its vivid foundation of slate minerality, the wine seems a bit drier than its sugar numbers might suggest. As so often is the case with Saar Riesling! 2022-2050+. **91.**

2020 Saarburg Riesling Kabinett AP# 5 - Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

The 2020 Saarburg Riesling Kabinett from Dorothee Zilliken is simply lovely from the outset, offering up the filigreed delicacy that only Kabinett can deliver. The refined aromatic constellation revels in scents of apple, lime blossoms, a hint of white cherry, wild yeasts, bee pollen, a gentle hint of cress and a complex base of slate. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, light on its feet and beautifully complex, with bright acids, excellent focus and balance and a long, well water finish. The technical details of this lovely Kabinett are 7.5 percent octane, 7.9 grams of acidity and 50.5 grams of sugar. Such ethereal beauty! 2022-2060. **92.**

2020 Bockstein Riesling Kabinett AP# 4 - Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

The Bockstein vineyard in Ockfen produces such beautiful wines in the hands of the Zilliken family and I often wish that they owned a bit larger parcel of vines here. In 2020, they only produced this stunningly beautiful Kabinett from this vineyard, which comes in at eight percent alcohol and carries 7.6 grams of acidity, which were balanced off with 58 grams of residual sugar. The bouquet is hauntingly beautiful, wafting from the glass in a mix of sweet grapefruit, lemon, beautiful Bockstein botanicals, a touch of wild yeasts, delicate floral tones and just a hint of incipient smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and medium-bodied, with gorgeous complexity and bounce, a succulent core of fruit, great transparency and grip and a very long, vibrant and dancing finish. This is a gorgeous Kabinett of delicacy and understated beauty that requires a bit of introspection to discover all of its shining facets. 2022-2070. **94.**

2020 Rausch Riesling Kabinett AP# 2 - Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

The 2020 Weingut Zilliken Rausch Kabinett is another throwback to yesteryear, before global warming ratcheted up the muscle of every bottling in wine country. This beautifully filigreed Kabinett offers up a refined, complex nose of lemon, fresh pineapple, gentle herbal tones, wild yeasts, incipient notes of smokiness, lime peel, gorgeous slate minerality and a topnote of elder flowers. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, youthful and complex, with a bit more mid-palate puppy fat than the Bockstein currently shows, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, mineral-driven and vibrant finish. Unlike the Bockstein Kabinett, which is absolutely irresistible out of the blocks, I would opt for giving the Rausch Kabinett a bit of time in the cellar to stretch its wings, as there is a lot more to unfold here in the fullness of time. 2027-2075. **94.**

2020 Rausch Riesling Spätlese AP# 1 - Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

The 2020 Zilliken family's Spätlese from the Rausch vineyard is truly special. The wine has an overtly salty aspect to its very complex base of slate minerality this year, to go along with beautiful fruit tones of pineapple, white cherry, wild yeasts, gentle smokiness, a touch of cress, lilacs, violets and elder flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and vibrant, with lovely filigree and complexity, zesty acids, impeccable focus and balance and a long, complex and hauntingly pure finish. This is gorgeous juice. 2022-2080. **94+**.

Middle Mosel

Weingut A. J. Adam (Neumagan-Dhron)

Andreas Adam started his family estate in 2000, after his parents had followed other paths (like so many of their generation in German wine country) and sought employment in the cities, rather than keep the family winegrowing tradition going. Happily, Andreas felt the call of the land and settled back in the Dhron Valley, just outside of Piesport, to regain the family winemaking heritage. His first wines were made in the 2000 vintage from a hectare of vineyard land that his grandfather had retained and still farmed. Andreas started piecing together vineyard land while he was still a student at Geisenheim and slowly accumulated five hectares, most of it in the steep side valley of the Dhron. Andreas' sister Barbara joined him running the estate in 2013, after completing her own degree at Geisenheim and apprenticing with the Kellers in Flörsheim-Dalsheim. I only had the opportunity to taste three of the Adam family's 2020ers, but they were all lovely wines.



2020 Riesling Trocken AP #2- Weingut A. J. Adam (screwcap)

The Estate Riesling Trocken bottling from Andreas and Barbara Adam is vinified and aged in stainless steel. The wine comes in at 11.5 percent octane this year and offers up a complex young nose of apple, grapefruit, a nice touch of wild yeasts, slate, lime blossoms and a touch of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and well-balanced, with fine focus and grip, good acids and grip and a long, nascently complex and bouncy finish. This is a lovely entry level bottling of dry Riesling. 2021-2035. **90.**

2020 Riesling Feinherb “Im Pfarrgarten” AP #3- Weingut A. J. Adam (screwcap)

This bottling of Riesling hails from the Pfarrgarten vineyard in Dhron, from vines on a flatter section of the vineyard, but fully fifty years of age now. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a lovely blend of tart orange, a touch of pineapple, pretty slate soil tones, a touch of wild yeasts, lilacs and citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and beautifully balanced, with a lovely pull between the fruit, acids and touch of backend sweetness. The finish has good length and just a touch of residual sugar to balance the mineral drive. Good juice. 2021-2035+. **89.**

2020 Dhron Hofberg Riesling Kabinett AP #20- Weingut A. J. Adam

The Adam family's vines in the grand cru vineyard of the Hofberg range from thirty to sixty years of age, with the older vines ungrafted. This Kabinett is made from the younger vines in this vineyard, coming in at 8.5 percent octane and offering up a youthfully complex and filigreed wine right out of the blocks. The bouquet delivers scents of gooseberry, white cherry, a beautiful base of slate and quartzite minerality, lime blossoms and a touch of bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, vibrant and filigreed, with a superb girdle of acidity, fine intensity of flavor and complexity, good mineral drive and a long, dancing and delicate finish. Classic middle Mosel Kabinett! 2021-2065. **94.**

Weingut Fritz Haag (Brauneberg)

Oliver Haag has really excelled in the 2020 vintage and the range of wines I tasted from his family estate in Brauneberg were exceptional across the board. I did not taste any of the estate's Kabinetten from this vintage, but all of the dry and off-dry Estate bottlings, the Grosses Gewächs, the Spätlesen and the two Auslesen were beautiful wines, showing off the sleek, refined side of the vintage, coupled to the beautiful terroir of Brauneberg and seamlessly perfect balances that promise long lives and simply beautiful drinking every step along the way. Based on how consistently complex and refined all of the Weingut Fritz Haag wines were this year that I had the pleasure to sample, I have to assume that the Kabinetten bottlings here are also excellent, but as only so many bottles could fit into the shipping box, I will have to look forward to tasting them at a later date. Utter classics from Weingut Fritz Haag in 2020!

2020 Fritz Haag Riesling Trocken AP #2- Weingut Fritz Haag (screwcap)

The 2020 Estate Riesling Trocken from Oliver Haag is a lovely entry level wine this year. It tips the scales at a svelte 11.5 percent alcohol and carries 8.2 grams of sugar to balance off its 7.3 grams of acidity. The wine offers up a lovely nose (that shows some of its Brauneberg sourcing of grapes, as well as those from the neighboring villages of Mulheim and Burgen) in its blend of lime, tart orange, gentle botanicals, slate and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and complex, with fine focus and balance, a good core, lovely soil undertow, bouncy acids and a long, really quite classy finish. Fine juice for its level. 2022-2045. **89+.**

2020 Brauneberger Riesling Trocken “J” AP #17- Weingut Fritz Haag (screwcap)

Oliver Haag’s 2020 Brauneberger Trocken “J” is made entirely from fruit in the villages Juffer (seventy-five percent) and Juffer-Sonnenuhr (twenty-five percent) vineyards. The bouquet is excellent this year, wafting from the glass in a mix of tart pear, lime peel, a touch of tangerine, a superb base of slate minerality, smoky tones, cress and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and a serious step up in complexity from the Estate Trocken, with a good core, excellent balance, a fine girdle of acidity and a long, focused and very classy finish. This is fine, fine juice. The technical details on the wine this year are twelve percent alcohol, 4.9 grams per liter of sugar and 7.3 grams of acidity. 2022-2055+. **92.**

2020 Juffer Grosses Gewächs Riesling Trocken AP #24- Weingut Fritz Haag

The 2020 Juffer Grosses Gewächs from the Haag family is quite dry this year, as its 7.4 grams of acidity were balanced off by only 2.7 grams per liter of residual sugar. The wine comes in at 12.5 percent octane and delivers a simply superb aromatic constellation of pink grapefruit, tart orange, limepeel, a beautiful base of almost salty soil, cress, elder flowers and just a touch of incipient smokiness. On the palate the wine is elegant, young and full-bodied, with excellent mid-palate depth and mineral drive, lovely acids and grip and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is going to be a superb wine, but give it some time in the cellar to allow its secondary layers to emerge. 2028-2085. **93+.**

2020 Juffer-Sonnenuhr Grosses Gewächs Riesling Trocken AP #8- Weingut Fritz Haag

The Weingut Fritz Haag 2020 Juffer-Sonnenuhr Grosses Gewächs has very similar numbers to the Juffer GG, coming in at 12.5 percent alcohol, with 7.3 grams of acidity and 2.6 grams of sugar. The wine shows of the inherent elegance of the vintage to great success, with the nose wafting from the glass in a refined mix of tart orange, fresh lime, smoke, a gorgeous base of grey slate, a beautiful array of the vineyard’s botanicals that hint at cress, fern and mint, and just a suggestion of citrus blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full, focused and tightly-knit out of the blocks, with a rock solid core, great slate undertow, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the long, nascently complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This will take longer than the Juffer GG this year to blossom, but it is going to be a beautiful wine once it is ready to drink. 2032-2085+. **94.**

2020 Fritz Haag Riesling AP #1- Weingut Fritz Haag (screwcap)

This is the Estate Riesling bottling from Oliver Haag that is finished at Feinherb levels of sweetness, though it no longer carries this term on the label- at least in the American market. I have always liked this bottling from the winery and the 2020 is no exception, as it offers up a lovely nose (once the hint of screwcap reduction is outfoxed in decanter) of pear, lime, violets, botanicals, slate and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and complex, with very good acids and grip, a lovely core and good mineral tug on the backend of the long finish. Its statistics this year are eleven percent alcohol, 8.4 grams of acidity and 16.5 grams of sugar, so it is a fairly drier styled vintage of this bottling, as those acids tend to eat up the perception of residual sweetness on the palate! A lovely bottle. 2022-2045+. **89+.**

2020 Brauneberger Riesling “Tradition” AP #4- Weingut Fritz Haag (screwcap)

The Tradition bottling falls between Kabinett and Spätlese in must weight and the 2020 version is very stylish, coming in at 11.5 percent alcohol in this vintage. I do not know its acidity and sugar levels, but it seems quite dry on the palate. The wine delivers a fine constellation of lime, pear, fresh mint, cress, a lovely base of slate, just a hint of bee pollen and a delicately smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and still fairly tightly-knit, with good

depth, excellent mineral signature, snappy acids and superb length and grip on the long and promising finish. This will need bottle age to blossom, but it is a very fine bottle. 2028-2065. **91.**



2020 Juffer Riesling Feinherb AP #19- Weingut Fritz Haag

The Feinherb designation appears on the back label for this bottling in 2020. The wine is twelve percent alcohol, but I do not have the figures for sugars and acids this year. The bouquet here is deep and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of tart orange, fresh lime, a touch of pear, lovely botanicals, a superb undertow of slate and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and zesty, with a good core, excellent mineral drive and grip, very good acids and a long, really quite dry finish. I have to imagine that the acidity here is over eight grams per liter, as the sensation of residual sweetness here is not particularly strong and is eaten up by the lovely acids. The textural improvement on the palate when one moves from a screwcapped wine to one sealed under natural cork cannot be overstated. Fine juice. 2028-2075. **92+.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese AP #5- Weingut Fritz Haag

The 2020 Brauneberger Juffer Spätlese AP #5 from Weingut Fritz Haag is an absolutely classical and filigreed example of this Prädikat level, soaring from the glass in a combination of white cherry, pear, cress, mint, slate, bee pollen, violets and lilacs. On the palate the wine is bright, pure, medium-full and flat out delicious, with beautiful acidity and mineral foundation, zesty acids and great focus and grip on the complex finish. This is certainly drinkable today, but there is much more here below the surface that will arise if given some bottle age! The technical

details for those keeping score at home are: eight percent alcohol, 8.3 grams of acid and 71 grams per liter of sugar. Great juice. 2022-2065+. **94.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese AP #7- Weingut Fritz Haag

The 2020 Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese from Oliver Haag is a touch lower in octane than the Juffer bottling, coming in at 7.5 percent this year, coupled again with acids of 8.3 grams and residual sugars of eighty-three grams per liter. The wine is even a touch more refined on the nose, offering up scents of apple, pear, fresh lime, bee pollen, complex, salty slate undertow, white lilies, iris blossoms and violets. On the palate the wine is even more delicately strung than the Juffer Spätlese, with its medium-full format transparent, filigreed and complex. The acids are bright, zesty and give great backend lift and grip on the very long and complex finish. Sheer beauty. 2022-2070. **94+.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Auslese AP #20- Weingut Fritz Haag

Oliver Haag's 2020 Juffer Auslese is a bit lower in acidity than the Spätlese from this vineyard, (7.7 grams versus 8.3 grams per liter), but the wine has such a lovely delicacy of step and precision that one certainly does not notice that it is much different. The bouquet is beautiful, wafting from the glass in a blend of white cherry, pear, a hint of fresh pineapple, lilacs, apple blossoms, a hint of mint and a lovely base of slate. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and beautifully balanced, with zesty acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, complex and vibrant finish. The rest of the stats on this wine are 7.5 percent alcohol and ninety-seven grams per liter of sugar. A beautiful Auslese. 2022-2100. **94.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese AP #6- Weingut Fritz Haag

The 2020 Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese from Weingut Haag is quite similar in numbers to the Juffer version, coming in at the same 7.5 percent octane and carrying ninety-five grams of sugar and 7.5 grams of acidity. The wine is equally refined on the nose, but a bit more youthfully reticent, offering up scents of lime, pear, tangerine, mint, iris blossoms, violets, bee pollen and plenty of citrus zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and nascently complex, with a beautiful core, lovely mineral undertow, bright acids and laser-like focus on the long and seamlessly balanced finish. This too is a truly lovely bottle in the making. 2027-2100. **94+.**

Weingut Julian Haart (Piesport)

Sometimes, as I taste through Julian Haart's wines, I forget that he only began in the 2010 vintage and he is just now beginning his second decade at the head of his small family domaine with this beautiful collection of 2020ers! His hand has been so steady on the helm of his family's estate since he started that it is sometimes difficult to think of his first ten vintages as those of a relative newcomer and there is little doubt that there are even greater wines ahead from this domaine than the already rich legacy of stunning bottles Julian has produced over that first decade! The year of 2020 was a very busy one for Julian and Nadine Haart, as they started construction on a new cellar soon after the harvest and fermentation of the 2020ers and were able to complete it by mid-summer of 2021, so the new vintage that was picked in October of last year will be the family's first in the new cellars. I will look forward to seeing these on my next trip to the Mosel. In the meantime, Julian Haart has made a truly brilliant set of 2020ers, with all of the classical mineral drive and filigree that one would expect from a great producer in a top flight vintage. Like Klaus-Peter Keller, Julian has been using a small, old-fashioned vertical press for his wines now for several vintages and loves the results. It takes a lot longer to do the

pressing each year, but based on the wines one tastes from Julian and Klaus-Peter these days, the results speak for themselves!

2020 Mosel Riesling AP #3- Weingut Julian Haart (screwcap)

Julian Haart's entry level bottling of dry Riesling is lovely in 2020. The wine comes in at an even twelve percent octane and offers up a youthfully complex bouquet of sweet grapefruit, gooseberry, a nice touch of wild yeasts, a lovely base of slate minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full, focused and complex, with a lovely core and mineral drive, sound acids and fine length and grip on the very nicely balanced finish. This wine is a bit reticent when first opened, so give it fifteen minutes of air before serving, as it blossoms beautifully. This is a great value! 2021-2040. **90.**

2020 Piesport Riesling AP #17- Weingut Julian Haart

The *villages* bottling of 2020 Piesport Riesling AP #17 from Julian Haart is beautifully refined this year, offering a notable step up in precision and elegance from the very good Mosel Riesling bottling. All of the fruit for this bottling hails from the family's three hectares in the Goldtröpfchen vineyard. The wine is 12.5 percent octane this year and delivers a gorgeous aromatic constellation of gooseberry, green apple, a touch of lime zest, wild yeasts, gentle notes of petrol, white flowers, a whisper of menthol and a complex base of wet stone minerality. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very refined in profile, with a lovely core, superb mineral drive and cut, impeccable balance and a long, complex and dancing finish. This is lovely juice. 2021-2050. **92.**

2020 Frauenberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #18- Weingut Julian Haart

The 2020 Frauenberg GG from Julian Haart is a stunningly pure and beautiful young wine. It is always fun to taste this wine in the rest of Julian's lineup, as the limestone soils of the Frauenberg just jump from the glass when surrounded with all that slate from the other wines. The wine tips the scales this year at a svelte 12.5 percent alcohol. The bouquet here is precise, vibrant and already showing lovely complexity in its mix of lime, tart orange, gooseberry, beautiful chalky minerality, white flowers, citrus peel and just a whisper of wild yeasts in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and racy, with laser-like focus, great cut and grip, a lovely core and a beautifully balanced and long finish just awash in limestone minerality. Gorgeous juice, but this will demand some cellaring time to properly blossom. 2028-2075. **94.**

2020 Ohligsberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #20- Weingut Julian Haart

Julian Haart's 2020 Ohligsberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs is just a touch riper than the Frauenberg, coming in at thirteen percent octane. The wine delivers a superb aromatic constellation of lime, tart orange, wild yeasts, petrol, a touch of fresh-cut grass, orange peel and a beautiful base of slate minerality. I love the green fruit elements on the nose here. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and gently grassy (in a very good way!), with a lovely core of fruit, superb mineral drive and focus, zesty acids and a long, nascently complex and seamlessly balanced, electric finish. This is stellar, but again, a long-distance runner that will demand bottle age to blossom. 2030-2075+. **95.**

2020 Goldtröpfchen Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #19- Weingut Julian Haart

The 2020 Goldtröpfchen GG is Julian Haart's lowest octane bottling at this level this year, coming in at an even twelve percent octane. This is probably the wine that best encapsulates the stunning, low fat potential of the 2020 vintage for dry Riesling in Julian's lineup, as its classically lower must weight gives the wine stunning precision and aromatic

purity. The bouquet leaps from the glass in a green fruity and mineral-infused blaze of lime, tart pear, gooseberry, grapefruit, beautiful, exotic botanical tones, a complex foundation of slate minerality, citrus peel, wild yeasts and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is deep, racy and full-bodied, with a beautifully seamless, electric structural chassis, a rock solid core, great backend mineral undertow, snappy acids and a long, tightly-knit and energetic finish. This is stunning juice in the making. 2030-2075+. **96.**

2020 Wintricher Herrgott Riesling Kabinett AP #10- Weingut Julian Haart

Julian Haart's Herrgott vineyard bottling of Kabinett from the village of Wintrich was new to my experience in the 2020 vintage, but the quality was every bit as familiar as if the label read Ohligsberg or Goldtröpfchen. The wine is 7.5 percent in octane and carries 59.6 grams per liter of residual sugar as if it were nothing, given the gorgeous spine of 2020's brisk acidity running through the wine. The bouquet is beautifully complex already, wafting from the glass in a mix of nectarine, apple, violets, lilacs, wild yeast, bee pollen and a beautifully complex foundation of slate. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-bodied and filigreed, with lovely intensity of flavor, bright, buried acids, great focus and grip and a very, very long, light as well water finish. This is such a beautifully classic example of Kabinett. 2022-2065+. **94.**



2020 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett AP # 21- Weingut Julian Haart

The 2020 Goldtröpfchen Kabinett AP #21 from Julian Haart is just a touch higher in octane than the beautiful Herrgott bottling, coming in listed at eight percent alcohol this year. The wine offers up a stunning aromatic constellation of apple, gooseberry, a very complex base of slate, a veritable sense of salinity, orange zest, a touch of wild yeasts, spring flowers and a lovely touch of currant leaf in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and dancing, with great delicacy and mineral drive, laser-like focus, great cut and grip and a very long, complex, seamless and electric finish. This is so delicately styled for a Goldtröpfchen! 2025-2065+. **94.**

2020 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett Alte Reben AP #22- Wgt. Julian Haart

The 2020 Alte Reben (or old vine) bottling of Kabinett from the Goldtröpfchen comes in at 9.7 grams per liter of acidity and found its balance at residual sugars of 44.6 grams per liter. This wine is a point higher in alcohol than the regular Goldtröpfchen Kabinett, tipping the scales at a very svelte nine percent octane. It offers up a truly stunning bouquet of peach, white cherry, cassis, white lilies, honeysuckle, violets, wild yeasts, a very complex base of slate and a topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and snappy, with laser-like focus and grip, stunning mineral drive, perfect balance and a very, very long, refined and filigreed finish. As the slightly higher octane might suggest, the Alte Reben Kabinett is a touch drier in style than the straight Goldtröpfchen Kabinett this year, but it is an utterly classical example of this Prädikat. 2026-2075. **97.**

2020 Wintricher Ohligsberg Riesling Kabinett Alte Reben AP #11- Weingut Julian Haart

The 2020 Wintricher Ohligsberg Riesling Kabinett Alte Reben from Julian Haart is another stunningly beautiful bottle in the making, coming in at 7.5 percent alcohol, with acids at ten grams per liter and residual sugar at 57.3 grams per liter. The bouquet is beautifully exotic in its constellation of wild yeasts, nectarine, tart mango, clementine, a touch of casaba melon, salty slate minerality, fruit blossoms and bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, young and medium-full in profile, with stunning intensity of flavor, a brilliant delicacy of step, ripe, zesty acids and a beautifully focused, complex and laser-like finish. This is the most primary of these four Kabinetten from Julian this year and will really demand some bottle age before drinking. A simply brilliant wine. 2028-2075. **97.**

2020 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese AP #12- Weingut Julian Haart

Julian Haart's 2020 Goldtröpfchen Spätlese AP #12 is a beautiful, classic, light as a feather bottle, coming in at a svelte seven percent octane and offering up a gorgeous bouquet of peach, gooseberry, a hint of passion fruit, honeycomb, acacia blossoms, a complex base of slate soil tones and a topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, crisp and laser-like in its precision, with snappy acids, lovely filigree and a long, complex and dancing finish. This is a middleweight example of Spätlese that offers stunning intensity of flavor and backend lift. 2021-2065. **94+.**

2020 Wintricher Ohligsberg Riesling Spätlese AP #13- Weingut Julian Haart

The 2020 Ohligsberg Spätlese is another tightly-knit, low fat and beautifully old school example of its Prädikat level, again coming in at a low octane seven percent alcohol in this vintage. The wine delivers a striking aromatic constellation of apple, pear, white cherry, slate, wild yeasts, lilacs and other beautifully musky floral tones and again, that lovely touch of bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and shows more mid-palate amplitude than the knife's edge of the Goldtröpfchen Spätlese. This wine has beautiful acidity, great focus and cut and a very long, superbly balanced finish. This is more of a

“classical” example of Spätlese in this day and age, but though it is a touch bigger and deeper than the Goldtröpfchen Spätlese, this does not equate to a superior bottle- just differently styled. 2021-2065. 94+.

Weingut Markus Hüls (Kröv)

Markus Hüls worked with Markus Molitor for several years prior to taking over his family's vineyards in 2012, which he began farming via biodynamic principles once he assumed the helm. I had never tasted any of his wines previously and quite liked most of the samples I was fortunate enough to try. The one exception was his 2018 Spätburgunder, which possessed lovely raw materials, but really struggled under its veneer of new oak tannins. The wine showed very good depth of fruit and the 2018 may well have the stuffing to eventually absorb all of its new oak, but it struck me that Markus could push this wine right up into the very top division of pinot noir bottlings on the Mosel if he would simply raise the wine entirely in used casks, thus alleviating the need for the wine to try and absorb additional tannins from new barrels. As the wine was so good under the oak, I have high hopes that we will see future renditions with no new barrels and in perfect harmony. The Rieslings here were all very good, and I tasted a range of recent vintages that reflected what was currently in the market. Like so many of the wines I tasted for this article that were sealed under screwcap, there were reduction issues with a few of the wines that demanded some extended decanting time to shake off the rebox, and like so many other producers in Germany, I think that Herr Hüls would be very well-served to bottle his screwcapped wines under agglomerated corks and lessen the reduction issues that have to be outfoxed with decanting. But, that said, there are lots of very good wines here.

2020 Riesling Trocken QbA AP #1- Weingut Markus Hüls (screwcap)

The 2020 version of Markus Hüls' Riesling Trocken QbA AP #1 comes in at 11.5 percent octane in this vintage. The bouquet is bright, precise and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, lime, a fine base of slate, citrus blossoms and a nice touch of saltiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, tightly-knit and racy, with a lovely girdle of acidity, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and snappy finish. I really like this wine, but the closure is already clamping down a bit on the backend and it demands some extended aeration to blossom. 2022-2035+. 89.

2019 Riesling Trocken QbA- Weingut Markus Hüls (screwcap)

The 2019 Riesling QbA from Markus Hüls is a Trocken bottling, though I cannot find any mention of this on the label. But, it only carries 5.1 grams per liter of residual sugar, which puts it well into the Trocken category. The wine is quite lovely on the nose, offering up scents of tart orange, green apple, salty slate minerality, a nice touch of wild yeasts and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and complex, with a fine core, lovely mineral drive and bounce, impressive focus and good length on the well-balanced finish. This wine is just a touch pinched on the backend from the screwcap, but giving it fifteen minutes in decanter works its magic quite nicely and the wine blossoms. For an estate Riesling level wine, it is really very well done and really deserves to be finished with a natural cork, so that one does not have to do an end-run around the reductive aspects of the screwcap. Not to mention that I suspect some people who buy this wine will not recognize its slightly clipped initial finish as related to its closure and will not decant the wine and let it blossom. 2022-2035+. 89.

2020 Schieferspiel Riesling Trocken AP #10- Weingut Markus Hüls

The 2020 Schieferspiel Riesling Trocken from Markus Hüls was finished at 6.3 grams per liter of residual sugar and 7.1 grams per liter of acidity. It tips the scales at a svelte 11.5 percent alcohol in this vintage. The wine is beautiful on the nose (and firmly underscores how crazy it is for Markus to put any of his wines under screwcap!), jumping from the glass in a blend of tart orange, pink grapefruit, salty slate minerality, lemongrass and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and complex, with lovely focus and balance, a good girdle of acidity and a long, complex and very tasty finish. This is lovely juice. 2022-2050. **90+.**

2019 Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken AP #22- Weingut Markus Hüls

Markus Hüls' 2019 Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken comes in at an even twelve percent octane in this vintage, sporting 6.2 grams per liter of sugar and 6.9 grams per liter of acidity. The wine is beautiful aromatically, offering up scents of blood orange, pink grapefruit, a touch of wild yeasts, a beautiful base of slate soil tones, dried flowers, gentle smokiness and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied, focused and wide open in personality, with great depth at the core, lovely soil undertow, sound framing acids and lovely length and grip on the very nicely balanced finish. Fine juice. 2022-2060. **92.**

2017 Letterlay Riesling Trocken AP #21- Weingut Markus Hüls

The 2017 Letterlay Riesling Trocken from Markus Hüls is a touch lower in octane than the 2019 Sonnenuhr, coming in at eleven percent in this vintage. The wine carries 7.4 grams per liter of residual sugar and 7.9 grams per liter of acidity, reflecting the generally racier aspect of the 2017 vintage *vis à vis* 2019. The wine is starting to really drink beautifully at five years of age, wafting from the glass in a vibrant blend of tart pear, tangerine, slate minerality, wild yeasts and a floral topnote redolent of both irises and lilacs. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with bright acids, lovely mineral drive, good mid-palate depth and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. This is quite tasty now, but has plenty of room to grow with extended cellaring. 2022-2060. **92.**

2020 Riesling Kabinett AP #30- Weingut Markus Hüls

I do not have any information on the village and vineyard sources of the 2020 Riesling Kabinett from Markus Hüls, but the wine is quite lovely and filigreed, coming in at a svelte eight percent octane and offering up a bright bouquet of apple, pear, slate, a touch of wild yeasts, dried flowers and a potpourri of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is medium-full, vibrant and youthful, with a fine girdle of acidity, good intensity of flavor and mineral drive and a long, focused and complex finish. This is a very tasty bottle, with true Kabinett sensibilities and filigree. 2022-2060. **91.**

2018 Spätburgunder AP #50- Weingut Markus Hüls

Markus Hüls has made a good, solid bottle of pinot noir in the 2018 vintage. The wine offers up a deep, ripe and nicely meaty bouquet of black cherries, dark chocolate, spiced meats, a fine base of soil, a lovely touch of fresh herb tones, woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit extracted in style, with a rock solid core, firm, chewy tannins, good focus and grip and a long, slightly dry-edged finish from the oak tannins currently sticking out a bit on the backend. I do not know what percentage of new oak this wine sees during its *elevage*, but here is a beautiful example of a wine that cries out to be raised entirely in used casks (maybe one to five years of age), just to keep any oak tannins out of the equation. The raw materials here are excellent, but I worry about whether or not the wine will eventually be able to absorb all of its oak tannins. If it does so, then it will merit the score at the top of the

range, but it is going to be nip and tuck right to the finish line and the oak may well win the battle here with extended bottle age. 2028-2045+? **82-89?**

Weingut Sybille Kuntz (Lieser)

Sybille Kuntz started making wine in her native Mosel in the 1984 vintage- one of the worst years in recent history- and things have looked up ever since that first difficult year. She prefers to make primarily dry wines, with her goal to craft one Trocken bottling per Prädikat level, until she reaches up to the level of Auslesen, which she usually prefers to finish at a Feinherb level of sweetness. Sybille was certified biodynamic in 2016. I tasted these three wines from her back here in New York in preparation for this article, as she had not yet shipped her 2020ers. These are the first three German wines I can recall tasting without any AP numbers on them anywhere on the labels. Sybille owns more than seven and a half hectares of vines in Lieser's finest vineyard site, the Niederberg-Helden, with many of these vines dating back to the 1920s. Sybille ferments solely with indigenous yeasts in stainless steel. All three of these wines were excellent, but I do wish the first two were bottled under natural cork, as they are way too high in quality to be held captive by this capricious closure and its penchant to reduction!



2019 Riesling QbA Trocken- Weingut Sybille Kuntz (screwcap)

Only a portion of the fruit for the QbA bottling from Sybille Kuntz hails from her vines in the Niederberg Helden, as the fruit for this hails primarily from her vineyards in the villages of

Bernkastel and Kues, as well as in the Pauls Valley just around a corner of the Mosel from Lieser. The 2019 comes in at twelve percent octane and offers up a lovely nose of apple, fresh lime, a touch of yellow plum, lilacs, very salty slate minerality and a bit of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, fine mineral drive and a long, balanced and zesty finish. This is outstanding QbA and truly deserves to be bottled under natural cork, as I had to play with the wine in decanter for half an hour before it really started to show its true colors. 2022-2045. **91.**

2019 Riesling Kabinett Trocken- Weingut Sybille Kuntz (screwcap)

The 2019 Riesling Kabinett Trocken from Weingut Sybille Kuntz comes in at a full point higher in alcohol than the QbA in this warm vintage, tipping the scales at thirteen percent alcohol. The wine is made primarily from the oldest vines Sybille owns in the Pauls Valley. Again, the wine takes a bit of coaxing in decanter to let it blossom out from behind the strictures of the screwcap, but it does this beautifully if a little patience is shown. The bouquet eventually offers up a refined blend of lime, pear, gentle botanicals, a beautifully complex base of slate, dried flowers, lavender and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent complexity and grip, zesty acids and a long, poised and very classy finish. This is excellent wine and impressively light on its feet for thirteen percent! 2022-2065. **92+.**

2018 Riesling Spätlese Trocken- Weingut Sybille Kuntz

Sybille Kuntz's 2018 Spätlese Trocken is made entirely from fruit in the Niederberg-Helden vineyard, with most of it being sourced from the vines planted in 1920. The 2018 version comes in at 13.5 percent octane and is beautifully elegant in profile for this level of ripeness in a completely dry wine. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a youthful blend of lime peel, tart orange, a nice touch of wild yeasts, botanicals, a beautifully complex base of slate, a hint of menthol and a lovely topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and youthful, with a rock solid core, excellent mineral drive and cut, snappy acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, vibrant and very promising finish. This will demand some cellar time to really open up and start drinking with generosity. It has enormous potential. 2027-2075. **94.**

Weingut Alfred Merkelbach (Ürzig)

I only received a single example of the 2020 vintage from Weingut Alfred Merkelbach this year, but it was a classically refined, filigreed bottle of Kabinett.

2020 Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Kabinett AP #1- Weingut Alfred Merkelbach

The 2020 Ürziger Würzgarten Kabinett AP #1 from Alfred Merkelbach is a beautifully expressive wine aromatically, with the bouquet jumping from the glass in a mix of Kaffir lime, pear, salty minerality, lilacs, bee pollen, a whisper of petrol and violets. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full and nicely filigreed, with lovely intensity of flavor, bright, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is a lovely Kabinett. 2021-2060. **92.**

Weingut Schloss Lieser (Lieser)

Thomas Haag's collection of 2020ers is absolutely beautiful, with all of the inherent, old school elegance of this vintage defining each and every wine. How old school are the wines? The range of 2020 Spätlesen I tasted all came in at seven percent octane, which really harkens back to vintages of twenty or thirty years ago! The Kabinetten are also beautifully delicate in personality this year, with traditional alcohol levels of 7.5 to 8.5 percent and really excellent

filigrees. One of the few positive aspects of this report being so late and having to rely upon already bottled samples of the vintage is that I was able to review four of the 2020 Grosses Gewächs bottlings from the estate. I do not usually get to taste these when I visit the winery in March each year, as Thomas Haag dutifully respects the precepts of the VDP and does not show his GGs in those early days, as officially, they are not supposed to be tasted by journalists until the official unveiling tasting on the first of September of the year following the vintage, which, if memory serves me correctly takes place in the city of Weisbaden. So, I was very happy to be able to taste four of the 2020 Grosses Gewächs bottlings this year from Thomas Haag and they were all excellent. This is an excellent vintage at Schloss Lieser, but this comes as no surprise, as the Haag family has been on quite a roll with the quality of their wines in the last decade or more. It has been so impressive to watch the growth of this estate, as Thomas Haag has added a bit of Goldtröpfchen here or a parcel in the Bernkasteler Doctor there, without the growing size of the estate in any way hampering the continued pursuit of the highest quality wine.

2020 Niederberg Helden Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #30 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The 2020 Niederberg Helden from Thomas Haag is a lovely and quite svelte GG, coming in at 12.5 percent octane and delivering a superb aromatic constellation of lime, tart orange, slate, beautiful botanicals, citrus zest, a dollop of petrol and just a hint of mossiness in the upper register that is exotic and extremely attractive. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and marvelously precise, with a superb core of fruit, great mineral drive and cut, laser-like focus and a long, snappy, elegant and beautifully complex finish. This is stunning juice. 2028-2075. **94.**

2020 Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #31 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

Schloss Lieser's 2020 Grosses Gewächs bottling from the Juffer Sonnenuhr vineyard in Brauneberg is one of the most beautiful dry Rieslings I had a chance to sample from the vintage! Like the Niederberg Helden, this wine tips the scales at 12.5 percent this year and offers up a truly stunning bouquet of green apple, fresh lime, gooseberry, a gorgeous foundation of slate minerality, orange peel, a touch of menthol, elder flowers and a delicate topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and utterly seamless, with a superb core, great soil signature, racy, buried acids and perfect focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. There is an effortless aspect to the balance here that is magical. 2030-2075+. **96.**

2020 Goldtröpfchen Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #33 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The 2020 Goldtröpfchen Grosses Gewächs from Thomas Haag is another beautifully refined dry Riesling. The bouquet is bright and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of tart orange, gooseberry, currant leaf, a lovely base of soil, wild yeasts, dried flowers and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and refined, with lovely depth in the mid-palate, snappy acids, excellent focus and grip and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2075. **94.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #32 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The 2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr GG from Schloss Lieser is also a very refined example of the vintage, sharing the same 12.5 percent octane as these other stellar dry Grand Cru bottlings. The nose is deep and complex, offering up scents of pink grapefruit, tart orange, slate, lime blossoms, gentle smokiness and a topnote of lime peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and more reserved in personality than these other GGs, with a fine core, excellent mineral drive and grip, snappy acids and a long, well-balanced and quite closed down finish. This is already settling in for hibernation and is going to need to be left alone for a while, but it will be excellent wine in due course. 2030-2075. **94.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett AP #10 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The 2020 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett from Schloss Lieser is a beautifully filigreed and delicate example of its Prädikat. The wine offers up a complex, wide open bouquet of lime, sweet grapefruit, slate, wild yeasts, a whisper of the vineyard's mossiness, lilacs and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, bright and seamless, with a lovely girdle of acidity, fine mineral drive and cut, very stylish fruit tones and a long, poised and perfectly balanced finish. Lovely juice. 2022-2060. **91.**

2020 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Kabinett AP #8 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

I do not normally associate the style of the Niederberg Helden vineyard with Kabinett, as this usually seems to be a site that attains ripeness pretty easily. But, the 2020 Kabinett from the vineyard this year has turned out beautifully, delivering a complex bouquet of fresh lime, tart pear, a beautiful array of botanicals, a lovely base of slate minerality, a touch of wild yeasts and a gentle topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, complex and filigreed, with lovely transparency and structural tension, beautiful fruit tones, bright acids and a long, dancing and crystal clear finish. Just a beautiful Kabinett and an expression of ripeness that one seldom sees from the Niederberg Helden in these days of global warming! 2022-2060. **94.**

2020 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett AP # 12- Weingut Schloss Lieser

Thomas Haag's 2020 Kabinett from the Goldtröpfchen is his lowest octane example, coming in at 7.5 percent this year. The wine is beautifully delicate on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of gooseberry, lime, currant leaf, slate soil tones, bee pollen, a touch of fresh mint, slightly savory, sage-like notes and plenty of lime zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is vibrant, refined and medium-bodied, with just a whisper more sweetness than the other two Kabinetten that I sampled, lovely filigree and bounce, zesty acids and lovely focus and grip on the long, complex and dancing finish. I could drink a bottle of this absolutely delicious Kabinett alone in about ten minutes, preferably staring out at the sunset over the Mosel River! 2022-2060. **93.**

2020 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Spätlese AP #14 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

Thomas Haag's 2020 Niederberg Helden Spätlese is a beautiful example of the vintage. The wine is bright, complex and zesty on the nose, jumping from the glass in a mix of lime, pear, salty slate minerality, bee pollen, a touch of wild yeasts, white flowers and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is vibrant, pure and filigreed, with a medium-full format, lovely acids and grip and a long, complex and effortless finish that closes with excellent lift. Just a beautiful Spätlese! 2022-2065. **93.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese AP #15 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The 2020 Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese from Schloss Lieser is another svelte beauty, coming in at seven percent octane and offering gorgeous delicacy of step, coupled to marvelous complexity and intensity of flavor. The bouquet jumps from the glass in an electric mix of fresh lime, pear, gentle botanicals, a beautiful foundation of slate, wild flowers, native yeasts, a touch of lavender and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is medium-full, refined and bouncy, with lovely flavor intensity, superb mineral drive, zesty acids and excellent length on the complex and filigreed finish. Utterly classical in personality. 2025-2065+. **94.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese AP #16 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

The Haag family's 2020 Spätlese from the Sonnenuhr vineyard in Wehlen is also a stunning young bottle of Riesling. I do not have the technical details on the wine, but the Oechsle level here seems just a tad higher than the Juffer Sonnenuhr Spätlese, but it shares the same filigree and backend lift. The gorgeous aromatic constellation delivers scents of pear, apple, lime

zest, a hint of currant leaf, a lovely base of slate, bee pollen and elder flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and zesty, with a beautiful core, lovely soil undertow, bright acids and laser-like focus on the long, seamless and vibrant finish. This is a stunning young Spätlese! 2025-2070. **95.**

2020 Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese AP #18 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

Thomas Haag's 2020 Niederberg Helden Auslese is a beautiful young wine, with a sense of filigree that is hard to find at this Prädikat level! The bouquet is still quite youthful, but offers up scents of pear, white cherries, lime blossoms, a touch of honeycomb, a beautiful base of slate, wild yeasts, lilacs and just a whisper of fresh mint in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and impeccably balanced, with lovely depth at the core, refined soil signature, excellent acidity and focus and a very long, complex and dancing finish. This is stunning Auslese! 2026-2100. **95.**

2020 Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese AP #19 - Weingut Schloss Lieser

Schloss Lieser's 2020 Juffer Sonnenuhr Auslese is equally refined and light on its feet as its counterpart from the Niederberg Helden vineyard. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex and vibrant blend of pear, white cherry, a touch of botanicals, a beautiful base of slate, violets, elder flowers and a whisper of honeycomb in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and youthful, with a lovely core and fine soil undertow, bright acids, excellent focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is quite a bit more primary in personality than the Niederberg Helden Auslese, but my gut feeling is that with sufficient bottle age, it will be every bit as stunning. 2030-2100. **95.**



Weingut Dr. Loosen (Bernkastel)

I received a lovely range of Estate Riesling bottlings and Kabinetten from the 2020 vintage from Weingut Dr. Loosen. The winemaking across the board was excellent and the classically-styled, filigreed nature and zesty acids of the Kabinetten were most impressive. Inexplicably to me, all of the Kabinetten were bottled under screwcaps, which is certainly not the course of action I would have pursued if our places were reversed and I had been the one to craft such beautiful Kabinetten from sixty-plus year-old vines in some of the middle Mosel's most beautiful terroirs. The wines had varying degrees of reduction issues, but all of them cleaned up nicely with time in decanter, so for drinking the wines in their relative youths, the closure should not be a major issues. But, for aging these wines over the longer-term, they would have been so much better off under some type of natural cork, and I really do not understand why Ernie Loosen does not choose to look into some sort of alternative to the screwcaps for his Kabinetten. The wines are just too damn good to be stuck swimming upstream against their closures for the rest of their lives!

Dr. Loosen Riesling Extra Dry Sekt NV

This was the first time I had ever tasted an example of the Dr. Loosen Riesling Extra Dry Sekt, the wine is fermented in the bottle and given fifteen months of aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. It is finished with a *dosage* of fourteen grams per liter. The wine offers up a bright and stylish nose of green apple, lemon, slate, a touch of bread dough and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and brisk with youthful acidity, with a good core and minerality, frothy *mousse* and pretty good length on the well-balanced finish. This is a tasty bottle of Sekt. 2022-2035. **87.**

2020 Red Slate Riesling Trocken AP #35 - Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The 2020 Red Slate Riesling Trocken from Dr. Loosen is made all from vineyards in towns with red slate, as the name implies, including Ürzig, Erden and Kinheim. The wine is fermented entirely with indigenous yeasts in old *fuders* and given fully a year's worth of *elevage* prior to bottling, so this is an entry level wine that is treated pretty seriously in the cellars. The 2020 comes in at twelve percent octane and carries 9.5 grams per liter of sugar. It offers up a bright bouquet of tart orange, grapefruit, slate, lime peel and a topnote of elder flowers. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and very nicely balanced, with good mineral drive and grip, zesty acids and fine length on the well-balanced finish. 2022-2040. **89.**

2020 Blue Slate Riesling Kabinett AP #32- Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The 2020 Blue Slate Riesling Kabinett from Ernie Loosen comes in at eight percent octane this year, carrying 8.3 grams per liter of acidity and was finished with 43.6 grams of sugar. The wine is assembled from parcels in Bernkastel, Graach and Wehlen. The bouquet is bright and complex, offering up scents of apple, lime zest, slate, lilacs and a touch of lavender. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, crisp and complex, with lovely focus and balance, lovely slate undertow and plenty of grip on the long finish. It is just a touch reductive when first opened and needs a bit of air to unclench on the finish, but blossom it does very nicely with ten or fifteen minutes in decanter. Fine juice. 2022-2040+. **89.**

2020 Bernkasteler Lay Riesling Kabinett AP #18- Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The Weingut Dr. Loosen 2020 Kabinett from the Bernkasteler Lay is made from some of the estate's younger vines in this vineyard, as they are only a bit over sixty years of age. The wine is just a tad riper than the Blue Slate bottling, tipping the scales at still quite svelte 8.5 percent alcohol and bringing along 45.5 grams of residual sugar and 8.5 grams of acidity. The

lovely nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, salty slate minerality, spring flowers and just a hint of bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is focused, medium-full and snappy, with a good core and mineral drive, fine balance and a long, zesty and complex finish. I like this wine very much, but I do not like how the screwcap has altered it texturally already, as the wine is starting to get a bit sharp in its components from the coming redox. It is insane to bottle a wine this good and potentially long-lived under a screwcap, as it loses a couple of points just from what the closure is already doing to the wine! 2022-2050? **91.**

2020 Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Kabinett AP #66- Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The 2020 Ürziger Würzgarten Kabinett from Dr. Loosen is a beautifully filigreed and delicate example of the vintage, coming in at an even eight percent octane and carting 45.4 grams of sugar to balance out its 8.4 grams of acidity this year. This too is already getting a touch off-putting from reduction issues when first poured, but fifteen minutes in decanter does the trick nicely and allows the wine to offer up a lovely aromatic constellation of strawberries, apple, rose petals, violets, gentle spice tones, a lovely base of minerality and a touch of bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-bodied and transparent, with lovely lightness of step, bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and light as well water finish. Lord, this deserves a natural cork! 2022-2050. **92.**

2020 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett AP # 64- Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The Dr. Loosen 2020 Kabinett from the Treppchen vineyard is another really lovely example of its Prädikat that I would never have demeaned by bottling under the screw. But, like all of these fine Kabinetten, a bit of time in decanter does the trick (for now), allowing the bouquet to waft from the glass in a lovely blend of fresh lime, strawberries, complex slate minerality, citrus peel, a touch of bee pollen and a topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, delicate and medium-bodied, with excellent filigree and complexity, bright acids and lovely focus and balance on the long and refined finish. The technical details on this lovely Kabinett are 8.5 percent octane, 8.4 grams of acidity and 40.6 grams of sugar. Of all of these Kabinetten from the estate, the Treppchen is showing truest to form from the moment it is opened. Fine, fine juice. 2022-2050. **93+.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett AP # 65- Weingut Dr. Loosen (screwcap)

The 2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett from Ernie Loosen comes in at eight percent octane, with 8.6 grams per liter of acidity and 44.2 grams of residual sugar this year. The wine is the least affected aromatically by its closure of these four Kabinetten, offering up a refined nose of pear, white cherry, vanilla bean, bee pollen, white lilies and a lovely base of slate. On the palate the wine is vibrant, focused and medium-full, with great focus and grip, lovely intensity of flavor and mineral drive and a long, snappy finish. The screwcap shreds the finish a bit when the wine is first opened, so do decant it and allow this reductive aspect on the backend to blow off with some aeration. The underlying wine is simply stunning (and would certainly garner a couple more points if it were bottled under cork). 2022-2050+. **93.**

Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm (Wehlen)

Katarina Prüm has made a breathtakingly beautiful set of 2020ers. I had intended to write to her after I tasted these wines to get some details about the vintage here at Weingut Prüm, but as I ended up saving the wines for near the end of the preparation for this article (so that I could drink some of them!), it really seemed like it would be impolite to ask a lot of questions and demand answers back almost immediately, so I decided I would just let the tasting notes below do the talking for this stunning vintage from Katarina Prüm! The wines across the

board are simply brilliant, with the Kabinetten delicate, light on their feet and perfectly filigreed in personality. The Spätlesen are utterly classical in nature, with taught, minerally-infused structures carrying some of the purest and most beautifully enchanting fruit tones one can imagine wafting out of a wine glass. They are built to age long and gracefully and I will not open a bottle of any of the 2020 Spätlesen here for at least eight to ten years, as they are currently hiding several additional layers of complexity behind their lovely harnesses of acidity. The three Auslesen I tasted had a refined touch of very clean botrytis to them, or so they at least tasted to my palate. The noble rot in the wines seems to mostly have just further concentrated the inherent beauty in each wine, so that they are deeper and a touch racier than the Spätlesen, but no less pure or precise.

2020 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett AP #10- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

Katarina Prüm's 2020 Bernkasteler Badstube Kabinett AP #10 is truly a beautiful and utterly classical example of its Prädikat. The refined bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, tart pear, wild yeasts, a lovely base of slate, spring flowers and just a whispery of savory tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, vibrant and zesty, with beautiful filigree and mineral undertow, excellent acids and grip and a long, seamlessly balanced and perfectly focused, complex finish. Utterly classic. 2022-265+. **93.**

2020 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett AP #11- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

The 2020 Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett AP #11 from Weingut Prüm is simply a stunning young wine. The wine delivers a complex aromatic constellation of lime, tangerine, lavender, crystalline slate minerality, bee pollen, citrus zest and a topnote of gentle botanicals that is very exotic coming from the Himmelreich vineyard. On the palate the wine is bright, delicate and medium-bodied, with laser-like focus, beautiful youthful complexity, impeccable balance and a long, dancing and filigreed finish. This is young, classic and utterly brilliant in its electric potential! 2027-2075. **95+.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett AP #12- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

The Prüm family's 2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett AP #12 is every bit as stunning as the Himmelreich Kabinett this year. The beautiful bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of pear, apple, incipient notes of white cherry, citrus zest, a lovely base of slate minerality, a hint of vanilla bean and a floral topnote redolent of apple blossoms and lavender. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-bodied and beautifully tensile for the vintage, with excellent focus and cut, a lovely core, great mineral drive and a very, very long, vibrant and perfectly balanced finish. Stunning juice. 2028-2075. **96.**

2020 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Spätlese AP #13- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

Katarina Prüm's 2020 Badstube Spätlese is simply stunning and one of the best wines I have ever tasted from this vineyard. The bouquet is electric, jumping from the glass in a mix of apple, fresh lime, lilacs, bee pollen, a touch of wild yeasts, apple blossoms and a gorgeously complex base of slate. On the palate the wine is vibrant, medium-full and zesty, with beautiful structural tension, great mineral drive and grip, gorgeous fruit tones and a very long, perfectly balanced and complex finish. Simply beautiful Spätlese! 2022-2065+. **94+.**

2020 Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese AP #14- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

The 2020 Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Spätlese from the Prüm family is another simply stellar example of the vintage. The bouquet is a bit more primary today than the Badstube Spätlese, but shows beautiful potential in its blend of pear, apple, lime zest, slate minerality and a floral topnote of iris blossoms and violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and

zesty, with a bit more mid-palate amplitude than the filigreed Badstube, great focus and grip, bright acids and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This will need a bit of bottle age to blossom. 2027-2065+. **93.**

2020 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese AP #15- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

Katarina Prüm's 2020 Graacher Himmelreich is a beautifully filigreed and absolutely classically-styled bottle of Spätlese. The wine is built for the long haul in this vintage, with a great girdle of acidity and mineral undertow that promises a very, very long life in bottle. The bouquet is still quite youthful, offering up scents of apple, pear, salty slate minerality, bee pollen, spring flowers, lilacs and violets. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and beautifully filigreed, with a lovely core, superb transparency and bounce, bright acids and a very, very long and promising finish. This is more refined and lighter on its feet than the Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Spätlese, but equally youthful and will deserve some extended cellaring. It will be pure magic once it is truly ready to drink! 2028-2075. **95.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese AP #16- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

The 2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese from Katarina Prüm is the finest of the four stunning Spätlesen I tasted for this report. The bouquet is gorgeous and the absolute epitome of this great *terroir*, soaring from the glass in a blaze of pear, apple, vanilla bean, a touch of white cherry, wild yeasts, a very complex base of slate and a beautiful array of floral tones in the upper register that include apple blossoms, violets and iris blossoms. On the palate the wine is fullish, precise and tightly-knit, with a beautiful girdle of acidity, lovely filigree and grip, laser-like focus and a very, very long, nascently complex and perfectly balanced finish. It will be a crime to open a bottle of this stunning Spätlese until it is at least ten years of age, but also perfectly understandable! 2030-2080. **96+.**

2020 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese AP #19- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

Katarina's 2020 Himmelreich Auslese is a simply stunning young wine. Aromatically, the wine is unbelievably precise and vibrant, soaring from the glass in a mix of pineapple, fresh lime, a touch of white cherry, bee pollen, wild yeasts, a crystalline base of slate minerality, a hint of honeycomb and a potpourri of citrus blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is zesty, medium-full and filigreed, with lovely depth and complexity, a beautiful girdle of acidity, laser-like focus and a very, very long, impeccably balanced finish. 2033-2100. **97.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese AP #20- Weingut Johann Joseph Prüm

The 2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese AP #20 from the Prüm family is every bit as beautiful as the Himmelreich. The bouquet is the quintessence of this great *terroir*, offering up a complex constellation of pear, apple, white cherry, vanilla bean, a hint of honeycomb, a gorgeous base of slate and a topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and bouncy, with excellent acidity, laser-like focus, excellent balance and grip and a very, very long, youthful finish. This is more tightly-knit out of the blocks than the already perfectly delineated Himmelreich, but it is every bit as stunning. 2035-2100+. **96.**

2020 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel AP #23- Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm

The 2020 Goldkapsel Auslese from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr is another stunning example of the vintage. The wine has a beautiful sheen of pristine botrytis defining its personality, with the bouquet offering up scents of white cherry, pear, fresh mango, apple blossoms, a lovely base of slate, gentle notes of honeycomb, violets and a beautiful topnote of lime zest. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and bouncy, with lovely delicacy of step, laser-like focus, excellent balance and grip and a very long, poised and utterly refined finish. Great juice. 2035-2100+. **96.**



Nahe

Weingut Emrich-Schönleber (Monzingen)

Frank Schönleber kindly sent me a case of samples of his superb 2020ers, and I was very lucky that this was one of the cases that did not disappear in transit this year. Usually I will have all of the technical details of each bottling, but this year, all I had was the wine. Which was just fine, as this is clearly a great vintage for the estate, with the dry wines in particular standing out as amongst the very finest that I tasted from the vintage in all of Germany. The inherent elegance of the 2020 vintage has dovetailed beautifully with the style of the wines Frank fashions from his vineyards and the quality of all of the dry Riesling bottlings here is exceptional this year, so one does not have to simply focus on the two stunning Grosses Gewächs to taste the best from the Schönleber family in 2020! The Prädikat wines here are also excellent, though the Kabinett and Spätlesen might be a tad richer in style than one might find from a similar Prädikat bottling from the middle Mosel in 2020. The Halenberg Auslese is stunningly beautiful and quite classical in all proportions. The 2020 vintage is a great, great success for Weingut Emrich-Schönleber!

Trocken Rieslings

2020 Estate Riesling Trocken AP #21- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber (screwcap)

The 2020 Estate Riesling Trocken from Frank Schönleber comes in at twelve percent alcohol this year. The wine offers up a stylish nose of pink grapefruit, tart orange, a fine base of minerality, lemongrass and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-

bodied, focused and zesty, with a fine core and soil signature, vibrant acids and fine balance and grip on the complex finish. This is really good entry level Riesling Trocken this year! 2022-2045. **90**.

2020 Riesling “Lenz” AP #22- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber (screwcap)

The 2020 Riesling “Lenz” from Weingut Emrich-Schönleber is a touch lower in octane than the Estate Trocken bottling, tipping the scales at a svelte 11.5 percent alcohol. The wine really offers up lovely aromatic complexity in its blend of tart orange, dried flowers, lemongrass, a touch of wild yeasts, lovely minerality, lemon zest and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and full-bodied, with a sweetness level that seems just a whisper above the threshold for official Trocken, good transparency and bounce, bright acids and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. I love the balance here. 2022-2045. **90+**.

2020 Riesling “Mineral” Trocken AP #24- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The Schönleber family’s 2020 version of Mineral is simply outstanding this year. With the wine coming in at 12.5 percent alcohol, I have to assume that this is officially Trocken in its level of residual sugar. The wine offers up beautiful complexity on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of blood orange, sweet grapefruit, lovely smoky overtones, wild yeasts, lemongrass and a crystalline expression of minerality that shows elements of quartzite in its soil foundation. On the palate the wine is pure, refined and full-bodied, with bright, snappy acids, excellent focus and grip, lovely complexity and a long, energetic and very precise finish. I would opt for giving this excellent wine at least a few years in the cellar to further unfold. 2026-2055. **91+**.

2020 Frütau Riesling Trocken AP #32- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The Frütau bottling was launched in the 2015 vintage, as it was no longer allowed to use the vineyard name of Frühlingsplätzchen for both a Riesling Trocken and a Grosses Gewächs bottling. The 2020 version of Frütau is excellent, delivering a deep and youthfully complex bouquet of grapefruit, tart orange, lemongrass, wild yeasts, slate minerality, citrus peel, a touch of cress and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and cut, bright acids and a long, complex and superbly balanced finish. This too deserves some bottle age to fully stretch its wings, but it is going to be excellent wine. 2026-2060. **92**.

2020 Halgans Riesling Trocken AP #33- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The Halgans bottling was also launched in 2015, for the second Trocken bottling made from the grand cru of Halenberg. The 2020 Halgans is also a very fine bottle in the making and will be an excellent value. The aromatic constellation offers up a beautifully refined blend of pear, pink grapefruit, wild yeasts, slate, gentle smokiness, white flowers and a touch of menthol in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, seamless and full-bodied, with a snappy girdle of acidity, excellent focus and grip, lovely complexity and a very long, poised and complex finish. Great juice. 2026-2060. **92+**.

2020 Monzinger Niederberg Riesling Trocken 1G AP #42- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Monzinger Niederberg Riesling Trocken from Frank Schönleber is a lovely premier cru bottling. The wine comes in at 12.5 percent octane, which is the same as many of these Trocken bottlings in the svelte 2020 vintage. It delivers a fine bouquet of tart orange, pink grapefruit, plenty of smokiness, dried flowers, wild yeasts and a fine base of minerality. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and a bit more overtly mineral in personality than the lovely Halgans this year, with a fine core, excellent mineral undertow and grip, bright acids and a long, nascently complex finish. Fine juice in the making. 2028-2070. **92+**.

2020 Frühlingsplätzchen Grosses Gewächs AP #44- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Frühlingsplätzchen Grosses Gewächs is a truly superb young wine. It too comes in at a refined 12.5 percent alcohol in this vintage and offers up an elegant profile on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex arrangement of blood orange, lime peel, wild yeasts, lovely smoky overtones, kaleidoscopic minerality, cress and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and very precise, with a rock solid core, superb mineral drive, snappy acids and laser-like focus on the long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is a stunning GG in the making! 2030-2100. **95.**

2020 Halenberg Grosses Gewächs AP #45- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 GG from the Halenberg vineyard is another *tour de force* from Frank Schönleber. The nose is so elegant this year, drifting leisurely from the glass in a complex blend of lemon, grapefruit, tart orange, menthol, wet stone minerality, dried flowers, wild yeasts and discreet smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with great focus and complexity, perfect balance and a long, precise and utterly refined finish. Simply great juice! 2030-2100. **95+.**



Prädikat 2020ers

2020 Monzinger Riesling Kabinett AP #35- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Monzinger Kabinett from Weingut Emrich-Schönleber is a lovely wine, coming in at 9.5 percent octane and offering up a complex bouquet of blood orange, fresh

pineapple, a fine base of minerality, bee pollen, white flowers and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full, crisp and complex, with fine focus and grip, lovely balance and a long, vibrant finish. This probably has the must weight for a lighter Spätlese, but was fermented a tad drier to give it some Kabinett sensibilities and is a lovely bottle, albeit, perhaps not as classically filigreed as some examples of this Prädikat in the 2020 vintage. But, it will age beautifully and I would be happy to drink it anytime, anywhere! 2022-2060. **92.**

2020 Monzinger Frühlingsplätzchen Riesling Spätlese AP #53- Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Frühlingsplätzchen Spätlese from Frank Schönleber is a lovely wine in the making, but like the Kabinett above, it is just a tad richer than classical examples of Spätlese. However, that said, there is tons here to like, as the bouquet is bright and complex, jumping from the glass in a mix of tangerine, fresh apricot, lavender, citrus zest, wild yeasts, a beautiful base of soil and a topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and beautifully transparent in personality, with marvelous fruit tones, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the vibrant finish. 2022-2065. **93.**

2020 Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Spätlese AP #54- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Spätlese also straddles the stylistic line between Spätlese and a light Auslese, but this wine is so good that I really do not mind it being a tad richer than a classic Spätlese. The stunning nose delivers a constellation of apple, pear, lilacs, violets, an exotic touch of botanicals, a beautiful base of slate and gentle smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and zesty, with gorgeous balance and grip, laser-like focus, great refinement and cut and a very long, very beautiful finish. I love this wine. 2022-2065. **94.**

2020 Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Auslese AP #57- Weingut Emrich-Schönleber

The 2020 Halenberg Auslese from Frank Schönleber is a gorgeous wine and fully underscores just how great the smattering of Auslesen can be in this vintage. The wine has a touch of botrytis, but is inherently delicate in nature and utterly refined on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a celestial blend of ripe pear, fresh apricot, just a hint of the mango to come, a gorgeous base of slate, lilacs, iris blossoms and violets. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and supremely elegant in profile, with a lovely core, fine soil undertow, bright acids and a very, very long, complex and utterly seamless finish. This is simply beautiful wine. 2022-2085. **95.**

Rheingau

Weingut Peter Jakob Kühn (Oestrich)

This historic family estate in Oestrich is currently run by the husband and wife team of Peter Bernhard and Viktoria Kühn, with ample assistance from Peter Bernhard's sister, Sandra Kühn. The Kühn family have run this Rheingau estate now for ten generations, dating back more than two hundred and thirty years! Since 2004, Peter Bernhard has farmed his vineyards biodynamically and the estate is now Demeter certified. Fermentations take place in both large oak fuders and in stainless steel- always with indigenous yeasts, and the Kühn family has moved to giving their wines longer elevage in recent years to allow them to be released into the market when they are starting to recover from their bottling, so that now single vineyard wines are fully three years out from their vintage before they are released into the market. As I do not get to the Rheingau too often on my annual trips to Germany, I had never previously tasted any of the wines from the estate until I had a chance to sample a range of the winery's 2018 and 2017 wines last year. This year I had a chance to work through a range of the Kühn family's 2019ers,

as the 2020s had not yet shipped here into the US. They were all excellent and every bit as fine as the 2017ers and 2018ers I tasted a year ago. I know I do not cover enough estates in the Rheingau and my familiarity with the region is not what it should be, but I do need to find time on one of these future trips to stop in and taste at this fine estate in Oestrich.



2019 Jacobus Riesling Trocken AP# 1- Weingut Peter Jakob Kühn (screwcap)

As I mentioned last year, the Jacobus bottling from Peter Bernhard Kühn is his Estate Riesling Trocken, made from production from several different vineyard parcels, with all of the plots of vines planted on slate. I am also very happy to note that this excellent bottling arrived under natural cork this year, rather than the screwcap that the 2018er sported. The 2019 Jacobus comes in at a svelte twelve percent octane, carries 7.3 grams per liter of acidity and 3.7 grams of residual sugar. It offers up a beautiful bouquet of tart orange, pink grapefruit, caraway seed, a lovely base of slate, citrus peel and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and well-balanced, with a fine core of fruit, lovely acidity and balance, impressive backend mineral drive and a long, complex and snappy finish. This is certainly drinkable out of the blocks, but it has the structure to age long and gracefully and I would suspect its best drinking is still five to ten years down the road. 2021-2050. **91.**

2019 Quarzit Oestricher Riesling Trocken AP #3- Weingut Peter Jakob Kühn

The Quarzit bottling from Peter Bernhard Kühn comes from vines planted in the village of Oestrich, with the soils here a combination of gravel, loess-loam and quartzite. As I mentioned in the spring, there are some young vines included in this cuvée, but the oldest vines in the blend are now sixty years of age, so this is certainly not a young vine bottling. The 2019 Quarzit has

plenty of acidity at 8.3 grams per liter, which is balanced with 4.3 grams of sugar and tips the scales at 12.5 percent alcohol. The bouquet is already beautifully expressive, delivering a blend of pear, tart orange, elder flowers, a lovely base of soil tones that have a saline note and a touch of wild yeasts in the upper register. On the palate the wine is racy, complex and full, with a rock solid core, superb mineral drive and cut, laser-like focus and a long, snappy and very, very promising finish. This is a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the excellent 2018 version, but it is certainly approachable if decanted for a half hour before serving. It is an excellent wine. 2026-2060, **92+**.

2019 Rheinschiefer Riesling Trocken AP # 2- Weingut Peter Jacob Kühn

As I observed in my note on the very good 2018 Rheinschiefer bottling, the grapes used in this cuvée all hail from the Hallgarten vineyard and are planted on pure slate. The wine is fermented in a combination of stainless steel and old oak *fuders*, with the 2019 version coming in at an even twelve percent alcohol, with acids of 7.3 grams per liter and residual sugar at 3.1 grams per liter. The wine is beautifully refined aromatically, wafting from the glass in a mix of grapefruit, a hint of yellow plum, very salty slate minerality, lemongrass, wild yeasts and a topnote of gentle white floral tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and snappy, with a superb core of fruit, excellent soil inflection and cut, impeccable balance and a long, complex and racy finish. This is outstanding juice, but it starts out life pretty tightly-wound and I would be inclined to let it relax a bit structurally with some cellaring time. 2026-2060. **93**.

2019 Oestricher Klosterberg Riesling Trocken AP #4- Weingut Peter Jacob Kühn

The 2019 Oestricher Klosterberg Trocken from Peter Bernhard Kühn tips the scales at 12.5 percent octane this year and is an absolutely stunning young wine. The bouquet soars from the glass in a complex combination of pink grapefruit, pear, tart orange, gentle “woody” tones, caraway seed, a beautiful base of slate, wild yeasts and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a rock solid core, great soil transparency and cut, ripe, snappy acids and great focus and grip on the long, beautifully balanced and complex finish. In contrast to the broad-shouldered 2018 Klosterberg, the 2019 is chiseled, mineral-driven and utterly svelte. Great juice. 2027-2065+. **93+**.

2019 Hallgarten Hendelberg Riesling Trocken AP #5- Weingut Peter Jacob Kühn

The Kühn family’s parcel of vines in the Hendelberg section of the Hallgarten are closing in on an average age of fifty, and these old vines have produced an absolutely stunning wine in the 2019 vintage! The wine has acids of 7.2 grams per liter this year, to go along with alcohol at 12.5 percent and residual sugar at an even eight grams per liter. The wine is stunningly beautiful aromatically, soaring from the glass in a mix of tart orange, lemongrass, a hint of yellow plum, wild yeasts, gentle smokiness, a beautifully complex base of minerality, citrus peel and a topnote of elder flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused, complex and seamlessly balanced, with bright acids, great focus and grip, lovely mineral drive on the backend and a very, very long, poised and electric finish. A stunning wine in the making. 2029-2075. **95**.

2019 Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Kabinett AP# 10- Weingut Peter Jacob Kühn

The 2019 Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Kabinett from Weingut Kühn is once again (as was the case with the 2018 version) pretty high in octane for this Prädikat, coming in at ten percent alcohol. But, as I noted last year, with climate change and soaring sugar levels, one either has to ferment the wine to a bit higher octane or end up with way too much residual sugar for a Kabinett bottling. The wine has plenty of acidity this year, coming in sporting 9.6 grams per liter, which were balanced off with just over thirty-nine grams per liter of residual sugar. The wine delivers a refined bouquet of apple, pear, lilac, bee pollen, salty minerality, white lilies and a

touch of wild yeasts in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, snappy and fullish, with a lovely core, excellent mineral undertow, vibrant acids and a long, dancing and complex finish. One would not expect a ten percent Kabinett to have such lovely filigree, but this wine succeeds beautifully in that respect! 2021-2065. **93+**.

Weingut Robert Weil (Kiedrich)

I very much liked the 2020ers I had the chance to taste from Weingut Robert Weil, with the selection of Trocken bottlings I sampled truly standing out as exceptional in quality in this vintage. The inherent elegance of the dry wines of 2020 seems to have dovetailed beautifully with the house style here and produced a truly stellar range of Trocken bottlings. The Prädikat wines here were also very good that I tasted, though a bit bigger and riper at their respective levels than what might be termed “classical”. However, despite the wines being a bit richer at each Prädikat level than at many other addresses in 2020, the quality was self-evident. The estate uses screwcaps for many of its basic level bottlings, which I feel is a shame, as the wines really deserve better closures, given how good they are for their respective levels. I fully understand that much of the market demands screwcaps for lower level wines, and they are also less expensive than the fanciest, single punch corks, but at this point in time, there really seems to be no honest disagreement outside of Australia and New Zealand that reduction under screwcap is a very real problem for wine. Agglomerated corks have been adopted in many wine regions for less expensive bottlings, where a top cork at over a Euro a piece is simply prohibitive for the price of the wine itself, and many domaines have found excellent success using these less expensive corks for their entry level wine and escaped the long reach of reduction problems with screwcaps. I hope that Weingut Robert Weil will think about this in the future, as I really had to work to undo the reduction in some of their 2020ers that were sealed under screwcap, and I have no doubts that most consumers at this level would not even know to do so if they encountered a reduced wine because of its screwcap. I fear that the estate is doing itself a disservice by continuing to use screwcaps for its lower level bottlings, as it is quite certain that some customers are going to encounter a badly reduced bottle from Weingut Weil under screwcap and simply conclude that the winery does not make very good wines and never buy another bottle from the estate. For those who think I might be overstating the case, just take a look at how much global market share Australia has lost since it fully embraced screwcaps as its closure of choice. However, that said, all of the Weingut Weil screwcapped wines eventually blossomed from under their early miasma of rebox with fifteen to thirty minutes in decanter and were very tasty once they took off their shackles.

2018 Rheingau Riesling Brut- Weingut Robert Weil

Weingut Weil's Sekt is produced via traditional Champagne methods, with the *vins clairs* fermented in stainless steel tanks, the secondary fermentation taking place in bottle and the wine given twenty months aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement. The 2018 is starting to show some lovely secondary development on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of peach, apple, a good base of soil, rye bread, gentle smokiness and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and snappy, with a good core and soil signature, frothy *mousse* and a long, fairly complex and youthful finish. A good example. 2022-2040. **87+**.



2020 Riesling Trocken AP #16- Weingut Robert Weil (screwcap)

The 2020 Riesling Trocken AP #16 from Weingut Robert Weil is produced from some of the flatter vineyards in the villages of Kiedrich and Eltville owned by the estate. The grapes are fermented and aged in older *fuders*, with the 2020 version coming in at an even twelve percent alcohol this year. The wine carries 7.7 grams per liter of residual sugar and 7.6 grams per liter of acidity. The bouquet here is quite lovely, offering up scents of tart orange, apple, a lovely base of slate, lemongrass and a topnote of lemon peel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and zesty, with a lovely core, good mineral drive and a long, balanced and quite dry finish. This is excellent Estate Riesling Trocken. 2022-2040. **89.**

2020 Kiedricher Riesling Trocken AP #20- Weingut Robert Weil (screwcap)

The Kiedricher Trocken bottling is made from some of the younger vine parcels in the estate's top three vineyards in the village. It's technical details are quite similar to the Estate Trocken, carrying 7.3 grams of sugar and 7.7 grams of acidity this year. It is just a touch riper as well, coming in at 12.5 percent octane. The wine needs a bit of decanting time to blossom, but eventually offers up a fine nose of pink grapefruit, tart orange, dried flowers, a touch of bee pollen, a lovely base of Rheingau soil tones and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and more precise than the Estate Trocken bottling, with an excellent core and mineral drive, bright acids and a long, nicely balanced and very classy finish. This is seriously good dry Riesling and truly deserves to be bottled under a natural cork. 2022-2050. **90+.**

2020 Kiedrich Turmberg Riesling Trocken AP #44- Weingut Robert Weil

The Turmberg vineyard is a monopole of Weingut Weil and is rated a premier cru. It has thinner topsoils than the grand cru Gräfenberg, and so it tends to show more slate influence in its personality. The 2020 Trocken Turmberg is an excellent wine, coming in at thirteen percent alcohol and carrying 4.9 grams of sugar and 7.5 grams of acidity this year. The wine delivers a very elegant aromatic constellation of grapefruit, apple, a touch of green orange, wild yeasts, a beautiful base of slate minerality, dried flowers and just a whisper of raw almond in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full and focused, with a lovely core, great soil signature and grip, ripe, vibrant acids and impressive length on the beautifully balanced finish. The textural sophistication of this wine, sealed under natural cork, coming on the heels of the two very good, screwcapped Trocken bottlings, really shows how superior cork is as a closure for Riesling! 2025-2065+. **92.**

2020 Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #42- Weingut Robert Weil

The 2020 Grosses Gewächs bottling from the Gräfenberg vineyard from Weingut Weil is an exceptional young wine. This comes in at the same thirteen percent octane in this vintage and carries only four grams per liter of residual sugar and acids of 7.5 grams per liter. The bouquet is beautifully complex right out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in an elegant blend of pink grapefruit, tart orange, a hint of white peach, elder flowers, a beautiful base of complex soil tones, wild yeasts and just a whisper of the smokiness to come with extended bottle aging. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and racy, with impeccable balance, great focus and cut, lovely mineral drive and a long, complex and very refined finish. This is a proper long-distance runner and will need plenty of bottle age before it blossoms, but it is going to be a superb wine once it is truly ready to drink! 2030-2080+. **94.**

2020 Riesling Tradition AP #19- Weingut Robert Weil (screwcap)

The Riesling Tradition bottling from Wilhelm Weil is made from the same vineyards as the Riesling Trocken, with the vines averaging twenty-five years of age. However, this bottling is fermented in stainless steel tanks, so that the fermentation can be stopped with a bit more residual sugar still in the wine. The 2020 Tradition was finished at eleven percent alcohol this year and carries 22.7 grams per liter of residual sugar and 8.3 grams of acidity. The overall balance works beautifully, but this wine is already a bit reduced from its screwcap and takes some vigorous swirling to get it to unlock. Eventually the wine opens up to offer scents of apple, tangerine, a lovely base of slate soil tones, spring flowers and a touch of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish and shows Spätlese level sweetness, nicely tied to underlying soil signature and bright, zesty acids. I really question the wisdom of selling an entry level wine such as this under a screwcap, as most entry level wine buyers are not going to know that the wine is just showing a bit reductive when first opened and they are going to come to the conclusion that the estate does not make very good wine, because it really does not show well until the reduction has been defeated. Once it opens up, it is quite tasty. 2022-2040. **89.**

2020 Riesling Kabinett AP #23- Weingut Robert Weil (screwcap)

The 2020 Riesling Kabinett AP #23 from Weingut Robert Weil is pretty ripe for its Prädikat level, as it comes in at 9.5 percent octane and still carries thirty-eight grams per liter of residual sugar. However, it does have 9.8 grams per liter of acidity, so it has plenty of cut and grip! Interestingly, the wine does not have the same issues with its closure as the Riesling Tradition and is showing quite nicely when first poured, offering up scents of peach, apple, elder flowers, orange zest, a lovely base of soil tones and a touch of honeycomb in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and shows lovely interplay of fruit, soil and acid. The

core shows good depth, the acids really enervate the wine nicely and the finish is long, complex and nicely balanced. It is not quite as delicate as many examples of 2020 Kabinetten, but it is a very tasty wine that somewhat straddles the line between Kabinett and a very light Spätlese. Good juice. 2022-2050. **90.**

2020 Riesling Spätlese AP #24- Weingut Robert Weil (screwcap)

I must say that it pains me to see a lovely Spätlese bottled up under a screwcap. Like a few of these other 2020ers from Weingut Weil sealed up under this closure, the Spätlese is fairly reductive when first opened and has to be decanted to clean up its act. The wine this year carries 48.7 grams of sugar, nine grams of acidity and comes in at nine percent octane. Once it blossoms, it offers up a very pretty nose of white cherry, nectarine, fruit blossoms, a touch of wild yeasts and a lovely foundation of soil tones. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and complex, with a lovely girdle of acidity, fine focus and grip and a long, classy finish that is just pinched a bit on the close from the screwcap. This really deserves a natural cork. 2022-2055. **91.**

2020 Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Spätlese AP #7- Weingut Robert Weil

The 2020 Gräfenberg Spätlese from the Weil family is really a beautiful bottle of wine, though it is a bit richer than many examples of Spätlese in this vintage. The wine tips the scales at 8.5 percent alcohol and carries fully ten grams per liter of acidity and this is balanced with 66.2 grams per liter of residual sugar this year. The overall effect is harmonious and delicious, though a bit broader-shouldered than many Spätlesen. The nose jumps from the glass in a complex mix of white cherries, pear, a touch of mango, a beautiful base of soil tones, bee pollen, wild yeasts and a topnote of lilacs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, snappy acids, beautiful interplay of fruit, sugars and soil and a long, beautifully balanced finish. This is more light Auslese than Spätlese, but it is an absolutely delicious wine. 2022-2075. **93.**

2020 Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese AP #8- Weingut Robert Weil

The 2020 Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese from the Weil family is quite a botrytized example of the vintage, offering up a beautifully complex bouquet of apricot, tangerine, mango, honeycomb, a hint of new leather and a lovely potpourri of floral tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent, with a honeyed opulence that is quite rare in this vintage, coupled with lovely acidity and soil undertow to produce a complex, beautifully balanced and flat out superb wine. This is way up there in Oechsle level and is a bit of an outlier for the vintage's general parameters, but a lovely exception. 2022-2065. **94.**

Rheinpfalz

Weingut Müller-Catoir (Haardt)

Weingut Müller-Catoir in the village of Haardt farms twenty-five hectares of vines. Cellar Master Martin Franzen and owner, Philipp David Catoir, began moving this iconic Rheinpfalz estate over to organic viticulture in 2012 and the 2015 harvest was their first certified organic vintage. In recent years, they have added to the estate's traditional holdings in the best terroirs in the villages of Haardt, Gimmeldingen and Mussbach with recent purchases in the village of Neustadt, which they will dedicate to pinot noir, as climate change has made the prospects for that variety better in German wine country with each passing year. The estate purchased the Vogelsang vineyard in Neustadt in 2018, from which they now produce a troika of bottlings of pinot noir. Weingut Müller-Catoir has always had a quite varied varietal pallet for

their wines, as for as long as I have been drinking German wines, this has been the reference point estate for Muskatell, Weissburgunder, Scheurebe and Rieslaner, in addition to their outstanding examples of Riesling. So, pinot noir simply further expands what is already a wide and multi-faceted lineup of different varietal bottlings. I should take a moment to mention that the labels of most of the Trocken bottlings here today, and there are certainly more of these were back in the old days, do not indicate that they are Trocken on the front labels, but in the fine print on the side of the label. However, I have listed them below as Trocken, so as to follow the nomenclature used for other producers' Trocken bottlings listed in the article, many of which do feature this designation prominently on their front labels.

Weingut Müller-Catoir was one of the crown jewels in importer Terry Theise's portfolio when I first met him in 1986, and these wines were only offered to a small handful of Terry's clients who bought sufficiently deeply of the other estates to merit a short and surreptitious offering of the wines the estate. The other producer who was handled like this in Terry's very early days was Helmut Dönnhoff. At the time, Weingut Müller-Catoir, in the hands of its long-time Cellar Master, Hans-Günther Schwarz was considered one of the very finest producers in all of Germany and the wines were highly sought after and hard to find (unless you happened to be one of Terry's top clients and had the wines gracing your shelves). Current winemaker, Martin Franzen took over the winemaking reins of the estate from Hans-Günther Schwarz when Herr Schwarz retired after fashioning the 2001 vintage here at Müller-Catoir. Hans-Günther was famous for his very long-lived, reductively-styled wines during the course of his long career, and the wines have changed a bit in stylistic terms since his retirement, but to my palate, they have not lost any of the superb quality that made Weingut Müller-Catoir the finest and most famous estate in the Pfalz for the last fifty years. If I recall correctly, the Müller-Catoir wines under Herr Schwarz were fermented and aged in old oak fuders, but this has been changed in recent times by the use of stainless steel for the vast majority of the wines since Martin Franzen took over the winemaking reins here. The wines today are also nowhere near as reductively made as they were back in the old days, so the style is certainly quite different than was the case when Herr Schwarz was in his prime and prowling the cellars in Haardt. But, despite the change in stylistic direction (some would say bringing Weingut Müller-Catoir into the modern era of winemaking from its more ancient style of yesteryear), to my palate, the quality has not diminished one iota and the wines today are every bit as brilliant as they were when I first began drinking them with quite a bit of frequency in the second half of the 1980s.

Non-Riesling White Varietals

2020 Muskateller Trocken AP #12- Weingut Müller-Catoir (screwcap)

The entry level bottling of 2020 Muskateller Trocken AP #12 from Weingut Müller-Catoir hails from vineyard parcels around Neustadt. Though the estate has been producing Muskatell for several generations, these are relatively new plantings, with the vines ranging from twelve to twenty years of age. The wine comes in at twelve percent octane and offers up a bright and expressive bouquet of pear, casaba melon, pretty soil tones and a fine array of floral tones in the upper register that are redolent both of fruit blossoms and honeysuckle. On the palate the wine is crisp, medium-full, light on its feet and complex, with lovely mineral undertow, bright acids and just a bit of backend pinching from the screwcap on the finish. Decant this wine before serving it, to undo the early compromise from the closure and to enjoy the wine to its fullest. It really is a superb entry level wine (and deserves a better closure). 2021-2035+. **90.**



2020 Haardt Moskateller Trocken AP #10- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The *villages* level bottling of Moskateller from Haardt is made from much older vines than the regional bottling, as the most venerable plantings are now nearly forty-five years of age. The wine comes in at twelve percent alcohol again in 2020, with 8.2 grams of acidity and 7.2 grams of sugar. It delivers a deep and complex bouquet of pear, passion fruit, a hint of coriander seed, a complex base of soil tones, orange blossoms, a hint of petrol and an exotic touch of vanilla bean in the upper register reminiscent of Riesling from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite primary, with a superb core of fruit, zesty acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and very promising finish. This is more serious by an order of magnitude and will need five to seven years to properly start to blossom. It will be outstanding wine in due course. 2026-2055+. **93.**

2020 Bürgergarten Moskateller Trocken AP #19- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The Bürgergarten vineyard has the very oldest Moskatell vines in the Catoir portfolio, as these vines are more than fifty-five years of age and are planted on sandstone. The 2020 version is a touch riper than the Haardt bottling, coming in at 12.5 percent alcohol, carrying eight grams per liter of acidity and 5.4 grams per liter of residual sugar. The wine is beautifully precise on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, nectarine, a hint of pink grapefruit, complex mineral tones, white flowers, fruit blossoms and a lovely topnote of coriander seed. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and seamlessly balanced, with excellent acids and grip, a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and a long, youthful and very promising finish. This will

demand a bit more time than the Haardt Muskateller before it starts to drink with generosity, but it too is going to be a lovely wine when it opens up. 2030-2065. **93+**.

2020 Haardt Sauvignon Blanc Trocken AP #11- Weingut Müller-Catoir (screwcap)

The 2020 Haardt Sauvignon Blanc AP #11 from Martin Franzen is a lovely wine that certainly merits bottling under a natural cork, as this wine is clearly built to age very nicely. Though this is the first example of sauvignon blanc I have tasted from the estate, these vines in Haardt are not particularly young, with the range running from ten to forty-three years of age, and this varietal has been available from the property for many years. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel tank, comes in at thirteen percent alcohol and carries less than three grams of residual sugar in this vintage. It offers up a bright and complex bouquet of gooseberry, grapefruit, cut grass, citrus peel, white flowers and a fine base of minerality. On the palate the wine is ripe, zesty and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil undertow and cut, impressive focus and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. This is an excellent sauvignon blanc with loads of personality. 2021-2035+. **92**.

2020 Mussbach Sauvignon Blanc Trocken AP #22- Weingut Müller-Catoir (screwcap)

The 2020 Mussbacher Sauvignon Blanc is from slightly younger vines than the Haardt bottling, as the oldest vines here only range up to twenty-two years of age. The wine is handled the same in the cellar as the Haardt and is slightly lower in octane this year, tipping the scales at 12.5 percent. It delivers a more delicate and overtly mineral nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of gooseberry, lemon peel, bee pollen, a beautiful base of almost salty minerality, elder flowers, discreet grassiness and a topnote of wild fennel. On the palate the wine is bright, elegant and tensile, with lovely mineral tug, bright acids, excellent focus and grip and a long, complex and very refined finish. The excellent Haardt sauvignon blanc is the bigger and bolder wine, but I have to give the Mussbacher a slight edge for its superior precision and mineral complexity. Lovely juice. 2021-2035. **92+**.

2020 Scheurebe Trocken AP #5- Weingut Müller-Catoir (screwcap)

The entry level Scheurebe Trocken is again from younger vines around Neustadt (much like the Muskateller bottling with this label), with the vines ranging from fourteen to nineteen years of age. The wine is 12.5 percent alcohol, carries 3.6 grams per liter of residual sugar and has acids of 5.2 grams per liter in this vintage. The wine offers up a lovely, youthful nose of gooseberry, lemon, a lovely base of soil tones, dried flowers and a nice touch of lemongrass in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a fine core, sound acids and a long, youthful and promising finish. I do not love how the screwcap has affected the textural aspects of this wine on the backend, as it is rather “digital”, as opposed to the warm “analog” palate impression of the Haardt Scheurebe bottling, sealed under natural cork. The wine does eventually unwind quite a bit with aeration, but the masters of Scheurebe in Germany really ought (in my opinion) to bottle all of their wines from this varietal under natural cork. 2021-2035+? **89+**.

2020 Haardt Scheurebe Trocken AP #9- Weingut Müller-Catoir

Though there are some relatively young vines also included in this bottling (ten years of age), most of these vines are in their forties these days. The old vines give this wine more aromatic and flavor amplitude, with the bouquet wafting from the glass tart orange, gooseberry, a gentle touch of grassiness, a lovely base of minerality, citrus peel, a hint of menthol and suggestion of ocean breeze in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and

primary, with a fine core of fruit, sound acids, good focus and grip and a long, youthful and quite promising finish. The statistics on this wine are thirteen percent octane, 5.1 grams per liter of acidity and 3.7 grams per liter of residual sugar. This will need some cellar time to blossom, but will be a fine drink in due course. 2028-2060. **92.**

2020 Haardt Weissburgunder Trocken AP #6- Weingut Müller-Catoir

Though the 2020 *villages* level bottling of Haardt Weissburgunder from Müller-Catoir includes some younger vines in its blend, the range here is from ten to forty-three years of age, so this is not a young vine cuvée by any stretch of the imagination. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel and comes in at 12.5 percent octane this year, with residual sugar of 2.7 grams per liter. The wine offers up a pretty nose of peach, apple, a touch of orange peel, a fine base of soil, white flowers and just a wisp of savory notes in the upper register that suggest wild fennel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and youthfully complex, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and cut, lovely balance and a long, serious finish. This is a fine bottle of pinot blanc! 2021-2035+. **90.**

2020 Herrenletten Weissburgunder Trocken AP #17- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The premier cru bottling of Herrenletten Weissburgunder is a bit riper than the Haardt cuvée in this vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent alcohol and carrying just a touch more residual sweetness at 3.5 grams per liter. The soils here are clay and sandstone, with a vein of chalk running through them. The wine delivers a deep and nascently complex aromatic constellation of pineapple, nectarine, a hint of banana, wet stone minerality and a beautiful array of tropical floral tones. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with zesty acids, excellent focus and grip, a superb core and a long, complex and vibrant finish. This is a truly exceptional example of Weissburgunder and a step up from the very good Haardt bottling. 2021-2040+. **92+.**

2020 Herzog Weissburgunder Trocken AP #18- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2020 Herzog Weissburgunder from Weingut Müller-Catoir is another fine premier cru, with the soils here sandstone. The pinot blanc vines in this vineyard are not quite as old as those in the Herrenletten (which ranged from twenty to forty-five years of age), as these vines run from six to twenty-three years old right now. The wine comes in at the same 13.5 percent octane, carries 6.5 grams per liter of acidity and residual sugar of 3.4 grams. The nose is deep and a tad more musky in personality than the Herrenletten version, but equally precise, wafting from the glass in a fine mix of peach, tangerine, casaba melon, fruit blossoms, salty soil tones and a touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is focused, zesty and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and cut, excellent focus and a long, youthfully complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is a bit more primary in personality than the Herrenletten out of the blocks, and I would opt to give this wine at least a few years in the cellar to allow it to more properly blossom before I started drinking it in earnest. Another lovely bottle of Weissburgunder. 2024-2040+. **92+.**

2020 Haardter Herzog Rieslaner Auslese AP #23- Weingut Müller-Catoir (375 ml.)

The 2020 Haardter Herzog Rieslaner Auslese from Martin Franzen is a stunningly beautiful young wine. The wine comes in at eleven percent octane, has 7.7 grams per liter of acidity and carries 95.8 grams per liter of residual sugar this year. The wine offers up a beautifully glazed and exotic bouquet of tangerine, gooseberry, papaya, honeycomb, a nice touch of soil tones and a topnote of tropical flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish, complex

and bouncy, with a great core, superb complexity and focus, lovely acids and outstanding length and grip on the vibrant finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Auslese, with a fine combination of shriveled golden berries and very clean botrytis. 2021-2075. **95.**

2020 Haardter Herzog Rieslaner Beerenauslese AP #24- Weingut Müller-Catoir (375 ml.)

Dessert wines made from the Rieslaner grape have been a staple of Weingut Müller-Catoir for far longer than when I first sunk my teeth into their 1986ers, and 2020 Herzog Rieslaner Beerenauslese is no exception to this long-running string of lovely Rieslaners here. The 2020 Herzog BA comes in at 10.5 percent alcohol, with 8.9 grams per liter of acidity and just over 131 grams per liter of residual sugar. The wine offers up a beautifully pure bouquet of tangerine, candied grapefruit, fresh apricot, a hint of the yellow plum to come with bottle age, honeycomb, a lovely base of soil tones and a stunning array of floral tones in the upper register that include lilacs, irises, honeysuckle and citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is bright, young and full-bodied, with a gorgeous spine of acidity, excellent focus and grip, a bottomless core of fruit and a very long, but, still quite primary finish. This is a wine that has many, many more layers of complexity to show on the palate, if it is given enough bottle age to properly blossom. I would let this wine emerge from its adolescence and allow its underlying layers to come to the surface by tucking it away in the cellar for a bit. 2028-2075. **93.**

Riesling

2020 Riesling Trocken AP #1- Weingut Müller-Catoir (screwcap)

The Estate Riesling Trocken from Weingut Müller-Catoir is crafted from flatter sections of several of their vineyards, with the soil often gravelly. The wine is fermented and aged in stainless steel and the 2020 version comes in at 12.5 percent octane. It offers up a nose of apple, tart orange, dried flowers, a nice base of stony soil tones, citrus peel and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, dry and complex, with a fine core of fruit, bright acids and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. As is the case with a couple of these other wines sealed under screwcap, the wine's backend texture is not as refined as the wines sealed under cork, but some extended aeration mitigates this impression to some degree. This is really an amazingly good basic bottle of Estate Riesling, but its excellent quality is somewhat hampered by its choice of closure. 2021-2040. **90.**

2020 Gimmeldingen Riesling Trocken AP #4- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The *villages* level bottling of 2020 Riesling from Gimmeldingen is fairly young vines by the high standards of Weingut Müller-Catoir, as these vines range from seventeen to twenty-seven years of age, all planted on losse soils. The wine is also 12.5 percent alcohol, augmented by 7.2 grams per liter of acidity and 4.2 grams per liter of sugar. The wine is nicely youthful, offering up scents of grapefruit, tart orange, salty soil tones, citrus peel and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and racy, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and cut, impeccable balance and a long, focused and still quite primary finish. This is an outstanding bottle of dry Riesling in the making, but it is going to demand a bit of cellaring before it start to drink with generosity. 2028-2065. **93.**

2020 Haardt Riesling Trocken AP #3- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2020 Haardt Riesling Trocken AP #3 from Weingut Müller-Catoir includes older vines in its constituent components than the Gimmeldingen bottling, as the oldest vines in this bottling are nearly forty-five years of age. It is just a touch lower in acidity as well, coming in at 6.9 grams per liter and carries 4.4 grams per liter of residual sugar and an octane level of 12.5 percent. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of apple, sweet grapefruit, tart

orange, a beautifully elegant base of minerality, a touch of wild yeasts, spring flowers, lemongrass and just a hint of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and nascently complex, with an excellent core, superb soil undertow, zesty acids, laser-like focus and a long, zesty and extremely promising finish. This is more refined in personality than the slightly more powerful Gimmeldingen, though qualitatively, they are certainly equivalent. Fine juice in the making. 2028-2065. **93.**

2020 Bürgergarten Riesling Trocken AP #13- Weingut Müller-Catoir

Müller-Catoir's 2020 Bürgergarten Riesling Trocken AP #13 is a really lovely bottle, showing a refined synthesis of ripe fruit tones and a lovely soil signature from the sandstone of this vineyard. The wine comes in at 12.5 percent octane this year, with 3.9 grams per liter of residual sugar and acids of 6.8 grams per liter. The bouquet is deep and expressive, jumping from the glass in a mix of sweet grapefruit, tangerine, lemongrass, a lovely base of salty soil tones, citrus peel and a nice topnote of wild yeasts. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core of fruit, good mineral undertow, a good chassis of acidity and a long, very well-balanced finish. This is approachable out of the blocks, but still a young wine and five or six years in the cellar will pay lovely dividends. Fine juice. 2026-2065+. **93.**

2020 Herrenletten Riesling Trocken AP #14- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2020 Herrenletten Riesling Trocken is a touch riper than the Bürgergarten, reaching thirteen percent alcohol this year, but it is also a bit higher in acidity as well, as it carries 7.6 grams per liter. The wine fermented a touch drier as well, so the residual sugars here are only 2.8 grams per liter. The bouquet is very refined out of the blocks, offering up scents of blood orange, pink grapefruit, white flowers, wild yeasts, chalky soil tones, a hint of straw and a delicate topnote of spice tones. On the palate the wine is focused, full-bodied and racy in personality, with lovely mineral drive and grip, a fine core, impeccable focus and balance and a long, nascently complex finish. This is more reserved out of the blocks than the Bürgergarten Trocken (perhaps due to the vein of limestone in the soils here?) and really will demand a bit of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. In due course, it will be excellent. 2027-2065+. **93.**

2020 Mandelgarten Riesling Trocken AP #15- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2020 Mandelgarten Riesling Trocken AP #15- Weingut Müller-Catoir also tips the scales at thirteen percent octane, while carrying a modest 3.6 grams of residual sugar and acids of 7.2 grams per liter. The wine delivers a lovely aromatic constellation of lemon, grapefruit, a hint of tart yellow plum, salty soil tones, delicate fruit blossoms and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with lovely focus and grip, an impressive girdle of acidity, fine balance and a long, youthful and promising finish. This too needs some bottle age before it will blossom and start to drink with generosity. 2028-2065+. **93.**

2020 Bürgergarten "Im Breumel" Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #16- Müller-Catoir

The Im Breumel is the filet section of the Bürgergarten in Haardt. The vines are now coming into their prime, as they are in excess of twenty-five years of age and all planted on the slope in this vineyard. The 2020 Im Breumel GG comes in at thirteen percent octane, carries 2.8 grams per liter of residual sugar and is would with acids of 6.8 grams per liter. The wine shows marvelous pedigree on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of blood orange, sweet grapefruit, wild yeasts, lemongrass, a lovely base of salty minerality and dried flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very precise, with a fine core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow, lovely focus and grip and a long, seamlessly balanced and vibrant finish. This is going to be a long distance runner, but this wine is going to be stunning

when it is ready to drink, as it has the depth of these other single vineyard Riesling Trocken bottlings, but more elegance and inherent complexity. Great juice. 2030-2075. **94+**.

2020 Gimmeldingen Riesling Kabinett AP #20- Weingut Müller-Catoir

Martin Franzen's 2020 Gimmeldingen Riesling Kabinett AP #20 comes in at 9.5 percent alcohol, carries 8.6 grams per liter of acidity and is balanced with 53.1 grams per liter of residual sugar in this vintage. The bouquet is quite beautiful, wafting from the glass in a mix of pink grapefruit, nectarine, salty minerality, lemongrass, lilacs, violets, bee pollen and wild yeasts. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and fairly sweet in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, zesty acids and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and very well balanced finish. This is more like a lighter-styled Spätlese in weight, rather than a classically filigreed Kabinett, but it is a lovely bottle nonetheless. 2021-2065. **93**.



2019 Haardt Spätburgunder AP #30- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2019 Haardter Spätburgunder is barrel-fermented and aged in older Burgundy casks, with the wine coming in at thirteen percent octane in this outstanding vintage. It offers up a very refined bouquet of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, a touch of fresh thyme, lovely spice tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely transparent in personality, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, seamless tannins, impressive balance and grip and a long, complex and vibrant finish. This is a very good bottle in the making! 2027-2055+. **91**.

2019 Neustadt “V” Spätburgunder AP #32- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The 2019 Neustadt “V” Spätburgunder from Müller-Catoir is another fine bottle of pinot noir. The grapes are hand harvested, fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged in older Burgundy barrels. Like the Haardt pinot noir, this is an Ortswein bottling (village wine) and also comes in at an even thirteen percent alcohol in this vintage. The wine shows off a touch more red fruit elements in its aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, a hint of raspberry, a beautifully complex base of soil elements, gamebird, woodsmoke, roses and a nice touch of gentle herb tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and full-bodied, with a bit more youthful structure to it than the Haardter bottling, fine intensity of flavor and grip, well-integrated tannins, good acids and soil signature and a long, nascently complex finish. This is a bit more primary out of the blocks than the Haardter and will need a couple more years’ worth of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity, but it will be a lovely wine in due course. 2029-2055+. **91.**

2019 Herzog Spätburgunder AP #31- Weingut Müller-Catoir

The hillside of Herzog is one of the finest vineyards in the village of Haardt, with the estate’s pinot noir vines here currently ranging from six to twenty-three years of age. Thirty percent of the hillside of Herzog is quite steep, with the rest a more gentle incline. The pinot noir grapes here are hand-harvested and again fermented with native yeasts and raised in older Burgundy casks. The 2019 Herzog offers up a deeper and more complex bouquet than the regular Haardt bottling, as befits its premier cru status, offering up scents of red plums, black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, smoked meats, raw cocoa, a superb base of soil, discreet spice tones, woodsmoke and a touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a lovely core, excellent soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, beautifully balanced and complex finish. I love the backend lift here. This is going to be outstanding pinot when it is fully ready to drink! 2029-2060. **93.**

Weingut Villa Wolf (Wachenheim)

Ernie Loosen purchased the J. L. Wolf estate in Wachenheim in 1996 and relaunched the winery under the Weingut Villa Wolf name. This property is designated to produce entry level bottlings from the Pfalz and I was able to taste one of the estate’s wines from the 2020 vintage.

2020 Sauvignon Blanc AP #40- Weingut Villa Wolf (screwcap)

The 2020 Sauvignon Blanc from Villa Wolf comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a bright and grassy nose of gooseberry, grapefruit, damp grass, a nice touch of soil and a gentle topnote of white pepper. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and focused, with a good core and soil signature, fairly gentle acids and solid length on the wide open finish. 20220-2027. **87.**

Rheinhessen

Weingut Keller (Flörsheim-Dalsheim)

Klaus-Peter Keller has made a simply stunning range of 2020ers, but do not expect them to drink on the early side, as in this fairly high acid and very pure vintage, he has bottled up a set of Riesling laser beams that are going to demand patience before they start to drink with even a modicum of generosity. They are tensile in structure, much like the 2010s were out of the blocks (though I am sure that the technical details of the two vintages would show that the 2010ers were the higher acid vintage), but about as pure and elegant in profile as any vintage

Klaus-Peter has made since taking over here in 2001 and they will be ranked as great cellar treasures once they have been given sufficient bottle age to start to stir. I only had the opportunity to taste one Prädikat wine from Weingut Keller in 2020, as Covid's continued surge confined me to the contents of a single case of samples of 2020ers from Klaus-Peter this year, but what a case of wine! The sole Prädikat wine was the Kabinett that the Keller family has fashioned from the one hundred and twenty year-old, ungrafted vines in the Schubertslay vineyard in Piesport. The rest of the 2020 Riesling roster in my case of samples was filled out with all of his Grosses Gewächs bottlings, plus the classic von der Fels Riesling Trocken and the estate's fine Westhofen Riesling Trocken, which hails from plot of vines in the Kirchspiel vineyard that Klaus-Peter prefers to sequester and bottle on its own. I also had the opportunity to try the three grand cru pinot noir bottlings from the estate from the 2019 vintage, which Klaus-Peter feels was his finest vintage to date for Spätburgunder (an assessment in which I heartily concur), so needless to say, this was one star-studded case of samples!



Klaus-Peter, Felix and Julia Keller during harvest time in 2020.

As long-time fans of Weingut Keller will already know, though these wines who are commented on below are the summit bottlings in the estate's lineup, there is an awful lot more here that is produced each year and of truly exceptional quality, as the various Silvaner cuvées

are always outstanding, the Scheurebe here is as good (in whatever guise it is bottled in each vintage) as was the case with this varietal back in Hanz-Günther Schwarz's days at nearby Weingut Müller-Catoir, and I am sure there are other Kabinetten in the 2020 roster from Klaus-Peter that did not fit in the shipping box this year and are also truly stunning wines. The Kellers have been one of the driving forces in Germany to place more emphasis on this Prädikat level and I have to assume that, in a vintage that was so favorable to producing classically filigreed Kabinetten, that Weingut Keller has made more examples than the simply magical version from the Schubertslay. I am very much looking forward to Covid one day being tamed enough that regular travel can be maintained again, as I truly miss our annual spring tastings at the estate in Flörsheim-Dalsheim each year, where we can spend the day working through a more comprehensive snapshot of the vintage with the Keller family! But, if one must work solely with the wine's at the summit of the vintage's quality hierarchy, then sacrifices must be made ☺ All of the 2020 Grosses Gewächs cuvées had already been bottled and came in or around 12.5 percent octane in this vintage. The wines are brisk, structured and built for the long haul, but also hauntingly refined and elegant in this vintage and once these wines are truly ready to drink, they are going to be legendary.

Klaus-Peter commented that he and his wife Julia are so happy to be joined full-time at the estate now by their son Felix, who has finished up his studies at Geisenheim and added even more energy to the family quest for ever higher quality. One of the changes that the Keller family has been able to make in recent times that Klaus-Peter feels is really making a positive impact on the quality of their wines is that they are using small basket presses for more and more of their cuvées. As he notes, "we have a second basket press now and try to press more and more with them" He continues, "with Felix taking charge and our small, passionate team, we now have the manpower for pressing very slow and long- sometimes two or three days for a single vineyard" and "you just get a super fine structure and a beautiful, positive phenolic backbone that will make the wines age even more gracefully." The winery is also moving away from using fossil fuels as much as possible and will have enough solar panels installed by next year to get all of their electricity needs in this manner. The vineyard work here continues to be refined as well with Felix now back at the winery all of the time, as he has been instrumental in making herbal preparations to lay in the vineyards to help fight disease and mildew naturally, and the family is planning on new pinot noir vineyards that will be very densely-planted and demand work solely by hand, but could be the start of realizing an even higher level of quality with the red wines here in the future. As Klaus-Peter concludes, "so really there is a lot going on here right now- more than what one single generation could handle, so we are really very, very proud to have the passionate next generation with us!"

Pinot Noir

As is customary when I am tasting the newest vintage of white wines from Weingut Keller, Klaus-Peter also shows the previous vintage of Spätburgunder. As Covid still prevented my visiting the estate in 2021, he sent along samples of the 2019 pinot noirs with the 2020 Rieslings reported on below. The Bürgel and Frauenberg were already labeled, but the Morstein was still wearing its sample label when it was sent it along in late October of 2020. Klaus-Peter wrote to me about the 2019 vintage for pinot noir and he is very enthusiastic about this year's lineup, "as for red Pinot, 2019 was a great vintage and perhaps best ever till now" at the estate. He used a lot of stems in this vintage, which he prefers to remove from the berries and hand

select for inclusion in the fermentation vats, as this way, he can make sure that he only has perfectly lignified stems in the vats. For the 2019s, he also used a “middle long fermentation time with very gentle pigeage for extraction.” As 2019 was a hot, dry summer, Klaus-Peter and his team picked the pinot noir early, noting that we “try not to harvest too late to maintain freshness of fruit” in the finished wines. This he has done beautifully, with the 2019 Spätburgunders here all coming in at a svelte 12.5 or thirteen percent octane and offering up stunningly beautiful transparency and great purity to their fruit tones. If the new, densely-planted pinot noir vineyard is going to take the red wine quality here even higher, the Hügelland may well be best known for its Spätburgunder a generation down the line!

2019 Bürgel Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs- Weingut Keller

The 2019 Bürgel pinot noir is a beautiful bottle in the making, coming in at 12.5 percent octane in this warm summer and offering up lovely complexity on both the nose and palate. Readers may recall that the Bürgel vineyard in Dalsheim is planted to German pinot noir clones, rather than cuttings that originated in Burgundy, but these vines now are fifty years of age and are producing a truly beautiful wine each year. The 2019 offers up a complex and nicely transparent bouquet of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a touch of spiced meats, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, lovely cinnamon spice tones from the stems and a gentle touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and youthful, with a superb core of fruit, tangy acids, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Like all of Klaus-Peter’s pinot noir bottlings, the 2019 Bürgel will need some bottle age to properly blossom, but it is going to be superb once it is ready to drink. 2029-2075. **94.**

2019 Frauenberg Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs (Selection Massale)- Weingut Keller

The 2019 Frauenberg pinot noir from Klaus-Peter Keller is an excellent young wine. The precision and soil signature that Klaus-Peter attains these days in his pinot noir bottlings is truly remarkable. The Frauenberg offers up a bright and complex bouquet of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, gamebird, a hint of fresh thyme, a gentle framing of cedar and a beautifully complex base of limestone soil. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and gorgeously transparent in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, impeccable balance, suave, fine-grained tannins and lovely focus and complexity on the long, tangy finish. This is a beautiful, beautiful wine in the making. 2030-2085+. **95+.**

2019 Morstein Spätburgunder “Felix” Grosses Gewächs “alte Reben”- Weingut Keller

The 2019 Cuvée Felix pinot noir from the Morstein vineyard is just a tad riper than the other two reds in the Weingut Keller lineup, as this wine comes in listed at an even thirteen percent in alcohol this year. The older vines here really did well in this vintage, as the bouquet soars from the glass in a deep and precise blend of red and black cherries, black plums, a touch of pomegranate, spiced meats, a complex base of chalky soil tones, lovely Vosne-like spices from the stems, a hint of bonfire and lovely, understated, cedary oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, youthful and full, with beautiful depth at the core, excellent mineral drive and grip, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and outstanding focus and balance on the very long, complex finish. This is the finest pinot noir to date I have tasted from Klaus-Peter! 2032-2085+. **97.**



Riesling Trocken

2020 Riesling “von der Fels” Trocken AP #12- Weingut Keller

The 2020 von der Fels Riesling Trocken is another lovely bottle in the making. This is always one of the finest dry Riesling values to be found in the market and this vintage is no exception. The wine comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a bright, youthful nose of tart orange, petrol, citrus peel, a fine base of limestone minerality, a touch of wild yeasts and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and snappy, with a fine core of fruit, good mineral drive and grip, fine focus and a long, racy and still fairly primary finish. This will need at least a few years in the cellar to relax structurally. 2025-2055. **93.**

2020 Westhofen Riesling Trocken- Weingut Keller

The Westhofen Riesling Trocken bottling hails from a parcel called “Liebesnest” in the Kirchspiel vineyard. The 2020 version is excellent, coming in at a svelte 12.5 percent alcohol and delivering a refined aromatic constellation of pink grapefruit, tart orange, chalky minerality, lemongrass and a nice dollop of wild yeasts in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise, with a rock solid core of fruit, great soil undertow, vibrant acids and superb length and grip on the impeccably balance finish. This wine will demand some bottle age to blossom, but this “baby Kirchspiel” is outstanding in 2020. 2027-2065. **93+.**

2020 Kirchspiel Riesling Grosses Gewächs- Weingut Keller

I am not sure why the stars seemingly aligned so beautifully for the Kirchspiel GG in the 2020 vintage, but this is unequivocally the greatest example of young Kirchspiel I have ever tasted from Klaus-Peter Keller! The wine again is perfectly ripe and 12.5 percent alcohol and offers up a celestial young bouquet of lemon, tart orange, a very, very complex base of limestone minerality, just a hint of wild yeasts, citrus zest and a potpourri of spring flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and racy, with a gorgeous core of fruit, superb backend minerality, bright, snappy acids and truly stunning length and grip on the seamless and dancing finish. There is a sense of refinement here in the Kirchspiel in 2020 that is usually reserved for the Abtserde! A brilliant young wine. 2033-2085. **96.**

2020 Hubacker Riesling Grosses Gewächs- Weingut Keller

The 2020 Hubacker is another superb young wine, and though it followed the finest young vintage of Kirchspiel I have ever tasted, it had no difficulties keeping pace. The youthful aromatic constellation delivers scents of pink grapefruit, blood orange, a dollop of wild yeasts, citrus blossoms, yellow limestone, orange peel and a cool touch of menthol in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and absolutely rock solid at the core, with lovey soil signature, bright, snappy acids, great focus and grip and a long, reserved and impeccably balanced finish. Though the Kirchspiel is more precisely detailed out of the blocks, my gut instincts are that the Hubacker may actually start to drink with generosity a year or two ahead of it. 2032-2085. **94+.**

2020 Pettenthal Riesling Grosse Gewächs- Weingut Keller

I know that it does not make sense to insert a red slate Grosses Gewächs bottling in the midst of all these beautiful limestone bottling in the Keller GG lineup, but I like the act of resetting the palate a bit with a touch of slate right in the middle of these grand crus. The 2020 Pettenthal GG is a brilliant young wine, offering up a beautifully refined bouquet of grapefruit, tart orange, wild yeasts, lemongrass, white lilies and a stunningly complex base of red slate. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with superb complexity and balance, laser-like focus, an outstanding core of fruit and a very long, brisk and simply stunning young finish. Another great, great young wine. 2032-2085. **96.**

2020 Morstein Riesling Grosses Gewächs- Weingut Keller

Klaus-Peter Keller's 2020 Morstein is everything one would expect from a great *terroir* in a great vintage, planted with old vines and crafted by a true master at the top of his game. The stunningly beautiful nose soars from the glass in a blaze of tart orange, pink grapefruit, salty limestone minerality, wild yeasts, dried flowers and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is very, very pure, racy and full, with stunning depth in the mid-palate, great mineral drive on the backend, laser-like focus and perfect balance on the very, very long and youthfully complex finish. All this magical wine needs is bottle age! 2035-2100. **98.**

2020 Abtserde Riesling Grosses Gewächs- Weingut Keller

The 2020 Abtserde is every bit as brilliant as the Morstein in this vintage, just differently styled and I am sure that each bottling will have its own coterie of fans over the coming fifty years! The bouquet shows all of the purity and precision that are the calling cards of the 2020 vintage, offering up a beautiful constellation of tart orange, sweet grapefruit, lemon peel, wild yeasts, a kaleidoscopic base of salty limestone minerality and a topnote of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, seamless and effortless in its perfect balance, with a stellar core of fruit, great mineral drive and cut, beautiful focus and a very, very long, pristine and nascently complex finish. 2035-2100. **98.**

2020 G-Max Riesling- Weingut Keller

Every year, after I taste the dazzling twin towers of the Morstein and Abtserde from Klaus-Peter Keller, I always tell myself that there is simply no way that the G-Max can possibly be even better than those two wines, and every year, it somehow manages to just nose ahead of them at the finish line! The 2020 vintage of G-Max is utterly stunning, but it is going to be a serious long-distance runner and will not be ready to drink for at least another fifteen years. Given the rarity of this bottle, it is incumbent upon those lucky enough to secure a few bottles to not let curiosity get the best of them and open this wine when it is still too young for primetime drinking, as this wine is going to take its sweet time blossoming! The gorgeous bouquet offers up scents of pink grapefruit, tart orange, a very, very complex base of limestone minerality, just a hint of wild yeasts, lemongrass, white flowers and a touch of lime zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full-bodied, with a flawless sense of balance and grace, a rock solid core of fruit, brilliant minerality and grip, racy acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long and electric finish. 2037-2100. **100.**

Off-Dry and Prädikat Wines

2020 Piesporter Schubertslay Riesling “Alte Reben” Kabinett - Weingut Keller

The one hundred and twenty year-old, ungrafted vines in the Schubertslay vineyard have produced a stunningly beautiful Kabinett in 2020. One has to admire the Keller family for making a Kabinett here, when if they made a Grosses Gewächs it could theoretically sell for a lot more per bottle, but as the vintage excelled for Kabinett, this is what was produced here in the Schubertslay this year! The wine is stunningly good, offering up brilliant aromatic complexity in its bouquet of fresh lime, gooseberry, a gloriously complex base of slate, elder flowers, bee pollen and a distinctive topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-bodied and filigreed, with stunning intensity of flavor, snappy acids, laser-like focus and a very, very long, seamless and dancing finish. Pure magic. 2022-2075. **100.**

Weingut Weedenborn (Monzernheim)

Gesine Roll is the winemaker at Weingut Weedenborn in the village of Monzernheim in the Hügelland section of the Rheinhessen. In addition to the Weedenborn family's sixteen hectares of vines they own in Monzernheim, they also have a parcel of vines in the grand cru vineyard of Kirchspiel in Westhofen. I had never had the pleasure to taste any wines from Gesine Roll previously and really liked the two Rieslings I tried. The sauvignon blanc and chardonnay were both quite reductive- the chardonnay so much so that I could never get it to open up in decanter and thus, did not take a note- and so it was hard to judge the wines under the strictures of their flawed closures. But, the Rieslings were very good and one always has to get excited to taste another example from the beautiful Kirchspiel vineyard!

2020 Sauvignon Blanc- Weingut Weedenborn (screwcap)

The 2020 Sauvignon Blanc from Weingut Weedenborn is a bit less reductive than the chardonnay (that was too reduced to review, as it never opened up in decanter). It offers up some lovely varietal signature aromatics of grapefruit, gooseberry, fresh-cut grass, citrus peel and a fine base of limestone. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and complex, with a bit of CO₂, a slightly pinched palate impression from its closure, the start of vegetal reductive elements and a short, clipped finish. Good wine, bad closure. 2022-2023. **86.**

2020 Westhofen Riesling “Terra Rosa” Trocken AP #26- Weingut Weedenborn (screwcap)

The 2020 Westhofen Riesling “Terra Rosa” Trocken from Gesine Roll comes in at 12.5 percent alcohol in this vintage and is really quite impressive, offering up a deep and complex nose of tart orange, lemon, a touch of pear, chalky minerality and a topnote of elder flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and long, with a fine core and mineral undertow, good acids and grip and a long, well-balanced and youthful finish. This is a touch pinched on the backend from its closure, but does open up nicely with a bit of decanting. It is a very good wine, and as I too often say, wines this good deserve natural corks! 2022-2045+. **90.**

2020 Kirchspiel Riesling Trocken AP #25- Weingut Weedenborn

As the estate is not a member of the VDP, their Kirchspiel cannot be labeled as a Grosses Gewächs bottling, but this is Gesine Roll’s top dry Riesling bottling. Her 2020 Kirchspiel comes in at an even thirteen percent octane this year and delivers a deep and complex aromatic constellation of pink grapefruit, tart orange, a superb base of limestone minerality, white flowers, citrus zest and a gentle touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with ripe acids, good focus and grip and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. I like the touch of oak here in the personality of the wine, but perhaps it sacrifices just a bit of backend lift on the finish? This is still a young wine and more complexity will emerge with some bottle age, but it is certainly not structurally closed down right now and is already quite tasty in its youthful guise. 2022-2045+. **92.**

Weingut Wittmann (Westhofen)

Weingut Wittmann in the Hügelland has been farming organically since 1990 and biodynamically since 2004. Philipp Wittmann has been in charge of the family estate for many years now (taking over from his father Günter, who was the family member who made the move to organic farming here all the way back in 1990), which now comprises twenty-five hectares of vineyard holdings. These include fine holdings in some of the most famous grand crus in the Hügelland, including 5.43 hectares in the fabled Morstein vineyard (with fully three hectares in the filet section of the vineyard from which they produce their GG here), 2.27 hectares in the Kirchspiel, two hectares in the Brunnenhäuschen (the official name for the Abtserde vineyard) and two hectares in the Aulerde vineyard. In addition to the beautiful panoply of vineyard holdings in the Hügelland, the Wittmann family also purchased some parcels in the Roter Hang section of Nierstein in 2014, from which they also make some outstanding bottlings (though I did not taste any wines from this sector in the preparation of this report). Philipp Wittmann is reported to like the elegance of the 2019 vintage a bit more than his 2020ers, but I had a very hard time choosing between the two vintages and certainly did not find any of these 2020s any less elegant than their 2019 counterpart.

2020 Weisser Burgunder Trocken AP #7- Weingut Wittmann (screwcap)

Philipp Wittmann’s Pinot Blanc vines are all planted on limestone soils in the village of Westhofen. Her barrel ferments this wine in older oak with indigenous yeasts. The 2020 version comes in at 12.5 percent alcohol and carries 2.4 grams per liter of sugar and 6.2 grams of acidity. It is a bit reductive when first opened, but eventually can be coaxed into offering up scents of white peach, apple, spring flowers, a touch of wild yeasts and a nice base of limestone. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, bright and fairly complex, with a good core, lovely soil signature and a long, bouncy finish. The screwcap here is already starting to cut short the finish a bit and it takes a good fifteen to twenty minutes in decanter to get the wine to blossom a bit. In the 2018

vintage, this was bottled under natural cork; I am sorry to see the change over to the screw for what is one of Germany's finest examples of Pinot Blanc, as the new closure hurts this wine. 2022-2030+. 87.



2020 Estate Riesling Trocken AP #6- Weingut Wittmann (screwcap)

The 2020 Estate Riesling Trocken bottling from Philipp Wittmann is also produced from vineyards in the village of Westhofen, fermented with indigenous yeasts and raised entirely in older *fuders*. The 2020 bottling is beautifully balanced, delivering twelve percent alcohol, coupled to 7.7 grams of acidity and 4.8 grams of residual sugar. This is a lovely entry level Riesling that again, has to swim upstream a bit against its screwcap, but it is not as reductive today as the Pinot Blanc. The nose offers up scents of apple, tart orange, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, a touch of citrus peel and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and zesty, with lovely mineral drive and grip and a long, fairly complex finish. This has the customary touch of CO₂ one finds in screwcapped wines, but is not particularly reductive yet and is already drinking quite nicely. A svelte middleweight Riesling Trocken. 2022-2040+. 89.

2018 Westhofener Riesling 1G Trocken AP #14- Weingut Wittmann

The "1G" on the label refers to Premier Cru, or "Aus Ersten Lagen" in German, and is analogous to a blended Premier Cru bottling from Burgundy. In this case, Philipp Wittmann makes this wine from his younger vine parcels in his two grand crus of Morstein and

Brunnenhäuschen, with the vines roughly fifteen years of age. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts in older oak *Fuders* and given ten months of *elevage* on its fine lees. The 2020 Westhofener 1G bottling comes in at 12.5 percent octane, has 6.8 grams of acidity and was finished with only 2.4 grams of sugar. The wine offers up a deep and youthfully complex nose of tart orange, pink grapefruit, chalky minerality, lemongrass, wild yeasts, citrus peel and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a good core of fruit, bright acids, good focus and cut and a long, promising finish. This has lovely structure and will need a bit of time in the cellar to properly blossom. Good juice. 2027-2065. **91.**

2020 Aulerde Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #16- Weingut Wittmann

The Aulerde vineyard sits at the foot of the Kirchspiel and is rather remarkable by the standards of Hügelland grand cru sites in that it is not a predominantly limestone-based *terroir*, as this vineyard's grand cru section is footed on clay and marl soils with just a wisp of chalk. The 2020 Aulerde GG from Herr Wittmann is a lovely wine, offering up an aromatic constellation of apple, lemon, wild yeasts, plenty of smokiness, a complex base of soil tones, orange peel and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent mineral undertow, zesty acids and a long, youthful and very promising finish. A lovely bottle that comes in at 12.5 percent alcohol, with 2.5 grams of residual sugar and 7.7 grams of acidity. 2030-2080. **93.**

2020 Kirchspiel Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #17- Weingut Wittmann

As I have mentioned before, the majority of the Wittmann family's vines in the Kirchspiel lie up at the top of the slope (where Klaus-Peter Keller also makes his GG from). The 2020 version is an excellent GG in the making, coming in at 12.5 percent alcohol and carrying 7.6 grams of acidity and 2.2 grams of sugar. The bouquet is beautiful, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, tart orange, white flowers, a superb base of limestone, wild yeasts and just a touch of Chablis-like straw tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and quite elegant in profile, with a lovely core, excellent mineral drive, bright acids and impeccable balance on the long, complex and very precise finish. Excellent juice. 2030-2080. **93+.**

2020 Brunnenhäuschen Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #18- Weingut Wittmann

The 2020 Brunnenhäuschen Grosses Gewächs from Weingut Wittmann is simply excellent. As I mentioned in my note on the 2019, the estate owns two hectares of vines in the Brunnenhäuschen, with 1.2 hectares situated in the Abtserde subsection of the vineyard; it is from these vines that their Grosses Gewächs is produced. The 2020 version is beautifully refined on both the nose and palate, offering up a fine bouquet of apple, sweet grapefruit, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, wild yeasts, orange peel and a topnote of lemongrass. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a lovely core, excellent chalky undertow, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the long and perfectly balanced finish. This is outstanding juice in the making! 2032-2080. **94+.**

2020 Morstein Riesling Grosses Gewächs AP #19- Weingut Wittmann

Philipp Wittmann's 2020 Morstein GG is another stellar young wine. The nose delivers a refined aromatic constellation of tart orange, pink grapefruit, a touch of wild yeasts, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, dried flowers and just a touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core, great soil inflection and grip, snappy acids and seamless balance on the long, laser-like and vibrant finish. Great juice. 2032-2080+. **95.**

2020 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Kabinett AP #20- Weingut Wittmann

The 2020 Weingut Wittmann Kabinett from the Morstein comes in at 8.5 percent octane in this vintage and is a beautifully delicious wine, but falling stylistically somewhere between Kabinett and light Spätlese in style. The lovely bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of nectarine, apple, chalky minerality, bee pollen and a potpourri of fruit blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is zesty, medium-full and nicely filigreed, with a lovely core, beautiful mineral drive, snappy acids and impeccable balance on the long and complex finish. This is not one of those “light as well water” Kabinetten, but it is an absolutely delicious bottle of wine. 2022-2060. **92.**

2020 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Spätlese AP #25- Weingut Wittmann

The 2020 Westhofener Morstein Spätlese from Weingut Wittmann is equally lovely to the Kabinett. This is only a touch richer in style than the Kabinett, offering up a refined aromatic constellation of peach, pear, a touch of guava, limestone soil, honeycomb and orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is vibrant, fullish, complex and filigreed, with beautiful refinement and complexity, bouncy acids and lovely length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. Gorgeous juice. 2022-2070. **93+.**

THE 2019 VINTAGE IN BURGUNDY ANOTHER BOLD, RIPE AND STYLISTICALLY VARIED YEAR



I had the opportunity during my December trip to Burgundy to taste the 2020s to also get caught up on a fairly broad selection of the 2019 vintage as well. Given that the crop of 2019 was a fairly short one for *vignerons* in the region, and was often followed by even smaller yields in both 2020 and 2021, I did not ask to taste full ranges of 2019s at any domaine I was visiting, but simply mentioned when making my appointments that I would be happy to taste a few examples of the 2019 vintage during my visit to taste the 2020 vintage, if it might be possible. Some domaines responded by showing most or all of their roster of 2019s, while others were only able to show a few, as allocations are quite tight for the 2019s at domaines where yields were short. I was perfectly content to taste whatever was possible at each domaine, and putting my notes together for this report, I realize that I did indeed manage to cover quite a bit of ground on the 2019 vintage. As I mentioned in the last issue of the newsletter when writing up the 2020 vintage, I had several tastings cancelled during my trip because of positive Covid tests, so the same holes in my report on the 2020s also are found in this article on the 2019 vintage. Like the 2020 vintage, the challenges of the growing season of 2019 has produced a fairly heterogeneous crop of wines, as the heat of the year required some difficult decision by *vignerons* and there was not clearly a single correct path in this year to craft outstanding wines. Maybe this is true in

every vintage in Burgundy, but some years pose more challenges and more complex questions and that seems to have been the case in 2019.

The 2019 vintage in Burgundy is another “solar year”, with record high temperatures set during one of the two heat spikes of the growing season, but outside of these two heat waves, temperatures averaged fairly normal over the course of the entire summer and picking was not particularly early in this year. Harvest generally got started for the reds in the third week of September, which was a welcome date in comparison to the August picking dates that would follow in the vintage of 2020! As Jeremy Seysses of Domaine Dujac notes, “2019 had a smaller possible picking window than either 2018 or 2020, so the range of differently-styled wines from the vintage is smaller and there is just a bit more homogeneity in the vintage than either the one before it, or the one that followed.” I like his sentiments about the vintage, but the range of styles (particularly for the red wines) which I saw during my two and a half weeks in the Côte d’Or and Chablis found the 2019s every bit as wide as is the case in either 2018 or 2020- but, perhaps this was just a reflection of the wines that I happened to taste. There are some very suave, forward and charming 2019 reds with fairly moderate alcohol levels, gently “baked” fruit tones (*à la* 1982 Bordeaux), pretty soil signatures, refined structures and long, potentially velvety palate impressions that should provide plenty of very, very enjoyable drinking a little bit further down the road. And then there are big, strapping, sometimes overtly overripe wines that probably range from 14.5 to well over fifteen percent alcohol, are sappy, chocolaty and chewy, with plenty of tannin to go along with their enormous depth of slightly prune fruit components. Speaking of the 2019 pinot noirs, these wines from the camp of riper and more powerful wines generally have less soil signature right now than one what finds in most young vintages of red Burgundy, and though they may come in time to deliver more *typicité*, they are generally a rather fruit-driven and muscular crop of wines. However, even the more overripe examples of 2019 I tasted do not have the same issues the 2003 reds had for example, and are still quite clearly big-boned pinot noir wines, rather than the more roasted, almost Châteauneuf-like wines one sometimes came across with the young 2003s. The camp of more svelte red wine examples of the 2019 vintage do not share this same issue and are often already quite beautifully reflective of their underlying *terroirs* and are lovely, velvety wines that should provide a lot of pleasure when they are fully ready to drink.

The growing season of 2019 in the Côte d’Or got off to an early start (if one can still say this with a straight face in our age of accelerating climate change), with warmer weather at the end of March getting the sap flowing in the vines and budbreak was relatively early this year (though not as precocious as in 2020). However, April of 2019 turned cold, with a small bout of frost striking on the night of April 5th and unseasonably cool weather remaining through the end of the first half of the month. The frost damage of 2019 was nowhere near as severe as had been the case back in 2016, which was good news for *vignerons*, but it did cut back potential yields. In addition, it was also rainy during the flowering period in June of 2019, which further reduced the likely crop size after the moderate frost damage that had been experienced in certain vineyards that first week of April. In general, flowering was more adversely affected by the wet weather in the premier and grand cru vineyards of the Côte d’Or, given their superior expositions which allowed the vines to be a bit more advanced in their vegetative cycles, whereas cooler microclimates in some *villages* level parcels were a touch behind in maturation and flowered under clearer skies (or at least less sustained precipitation) a bit later in the month. There were

two blazing heat spikes in Burgundy in 2019, with the first in July weathered quite well by the vines, as there were still adequate groundwater reserves and vines generally did not suffer from hydric stress. However, as it did not rain at all between the first heatwave in July and the second one that arrived in the middle of August, many of the vines shut down during this second bout of torrid temperatures and some bunches shriveled up from dehydration and further cut back potential yields. It remained dry through to harvest, with producers getting rolling in early September to pick chardonnay and mid-September for pinot noir in the Côte d'Or, but despite the heat spikes of the latter half of summer, the overriding theme of the 2019 vintage is really the extremely short crop.



Focusing first on the red wines of 2019, it was interesting to note that when tasting both the 2019 and 2020 vintage during the same visit to *vignerons*' cellars during my December trip, at some domaines the 2019 red wines were the higher octane vintage, whereas at others, it was the 2020s that were the riper wines. The 2020 wines always had the superior acidity, due to the concentration of acids from the drought conditions of 2020, but there are plenty of 2019s that also have good acids and it is most emphatically not a soft or unstructured vintage in this regard. Ever since my return from Burgundy, I have been wondering about why some domaines have higher octanes in 2019 and others find their 2020s as the wines with the higher levels of alcohol. One has to assume that much of this has to do with the more overt drought conditions of the 2020 vintage, which would concentrate sugars in the grapes if they dehydrated in the heat at

harvest time and could lead to higher octane levels as a result. As I tasted through the red wines of the 2019 vintage, I was struck by just how much I liked many examples, which showed some of the gently “baked fruit” tones of red Burgundy years such as 2000 or 2017, but without any loss of vibrancy to the fruit and always coupled to excellent underlying soil tones. Others are quite a bit more powerful and overtly ripe in style (perhaps more 1997-like), with high octanes and often with far more muscle than charm at this early stage of their evolution. Some of the 2019 reds are fairly forward in structural terms, whereas others have plenty of ripe, well-integrated tannins and will prove to be fine, long-term cellaring wines. So, this is not a consistent vintage in terms of style for the pinot noirs and it is once again a year, like 2018 and 2020, where one has to pick and choose from wine to wine to find the styles that are most attractive to one’s personal tastes.

The white wines of 2019 are also more of a varied lot than in some vintages, with probably even a bit less stylistic homogeneity than the subsequent vintage of 2020. But, this is not to say that there are not a significant number of truly lovely white Burgundies that were produced in the 2019 vintage, and often the 2019s at a highly successful domaine will prove to be a perfect foil to their collection of 2020s, as the wines will drink with true generosity and complexity fairly early on in their evolutions and allow for the corresponding 2020s to come out a bit more from behind their girdles of acidity with a bit of extended bottle aging. In general terms, it is safe to assume that a top white Burgundy producer’s collection of 2019s will be a bit higher in alcohol than their subsequent 2020s, with lower acidity, but still sound structural elements and no shortage of bounce and grip. As is the case in 2020, I really liked the quality of the 2019s that I tasted in Chablis on my trip, as the wines couple nicely ripe, generous fruit tones with plenty of mineral drive and very sound acidity levels. They are not as snappy and classical in profile as the 2020s, but 2019 is an excellent vintage in Chablis in its own right. Vincent Dauvissat commented on the 2019s that he likes them very much: “2019 is probably a bit better than 2018 in Chablis, as the lower yields concentrated the expression of minerality better in each wine” than in the corresponding 2018. Vincent’s wines are higher in octane in 2019 than his 2020s, and I asked him if he thought they might age along the lines of his beautiful 1992s, which were also wines that ranged from 13.5 to a bit over fourteen percent in alcohol and yet aged splendidly well. He thought for a moment and observed that “2019 is probably just a touch richer than the 1992s, but again, with better minerality due to the lower yields between those two vintages.”

With many of the 2019s that I tasted during my visit to Burgundy, the wines were quite often sampled after running through the domaines’ entire roster of 2020s. Given how much ground I was trying to cover during my trip, we would often start tasting the lineup of 2019s with time starting to press (as there is always another appointment just around the corner), and consequently, I did not always feel there was sufficient time to ask a lot of questions of producers about their 2019s. So, the individual domaine sections in this report do not often have the same detail in terms of date of picking, alcohol levels or percentage of new oak that I was able to take note of for the 2020s. Where I had enough time (usually the last tasting appointment of each day), I was able to get much of this information, but at other domaines, it was simply try to get the 2019s tasted as quickly as possible, hop in the car and tear down the *Route Nationale* to attempt to arrive at the next tasting reasonably close to on time! However, on the flip side, this vintage report has also benefited from being able to incorporate many sample bottles tasted here

in New York early in this new year, as the 2019s are generally still widely available in the market, so I have been able to nicely augment my notes from the November trip with an excellent array of wines from producers I did not have sufficient time to visit while in the Burgundy region.

As I mentioned in my previous report on the 2020 Burgundy vintage, a couple of domaines in the region prefer to taste the newly-bottled vintage with me on my November trips, rather than the most recent vintage out of cask, so I had in-depth looks at the 2019 vintage at both Domaine Joseph Roty and Domaine Coche-Dury included in the previous issue's article on the 2020 vintage. I have published those notes again in this report, assuming that subscribers interested in renewing their familiarity with the 2019 vintage a few years down the road would find it handy to have all of the notes on the vintage in a single report (rather than having to also check the article on the 2020 vintage). Similarly, I have also included the notes on the 2019s from Domaine de Clos de la Chapelle and Domaine Joseph Voillot here as well, though I tasted and wrote about those wines back last summer after the two domaines kindly sent me samples of their entire lineups from the vintage. Though this will create a bit of duplication in the database, it will also allow the entire 2019 range of tasting notes to be found in a single article when readers turn back to it for reference in the future.

One of the big issues facing *vignerons* in Burgundy right now has to do with a failing rootstock that was extremely popular with producers for the last twenty or twenty-five years, but which is seemingly starting to succumb to some combination of climate extremes and/or disease, so that vines that are planted on this rootstock are witnessing severely declining productivity and are beginning to be pulled up throughout the Côte d'Or. I wanted to write about this crisis out in the vines in the report on the 2020 vintage in the last issue, but given that the article was already so long, I decided to save this discussion for the piece on the 2019 vintage. The rootstock in question is known as "161/49C" and was considered the very finest option available in nurseries from the mid-1990s forward, due to its restrained vigor and penchant to produce the highest quality grapes. For the most seriously quality-conscious domaines, it was the rootstock of choice for any replanting projects that had to be tackled during this era and a great many of the finest *terroirs* have been planted on this rootstock in the last twenty years. For example, when the Mugneret sisters had to replant half of their old vines in Ruchottes-Chambertin back in the spring of 2000, it was all replanted on "161/49C", as this was the highest quality choice of rootstock available to them. These younger vines should just be coming into their prime today at age twenty-two, as Burgundians will tell you that the vines need to reach twenty to twenty-five years of age before they really produce their best fruit, but sadly, the vigor of these young vines is already now declining rapidly because of the problems with the "161/49C" rootstock.

To date, no one knows exactly why the 161/49C rootstock is failing so badly in the last few years. It was thought to be good at restraining yields, producing excellent quality fruit, was adroit at translating its underlying *terroir* into the bunches, very good for soils with high active limestone content and resistant to hydric stress. But, it seems that the rather severe conditions that climate change has recently wrought on the Burgundy region is posing a challenge that this rootstock is not up to surmounting, so that individual vines are starting to die with alarming frequency now on this rootstock, and the vigor of the vines that remain grafted onto 161/49C is falling off precipitously. *Vignerons* started out just pulling out the individual vines that fell ill

when the problems first started to show themselves a couple of years ago, but now it is becoming increasingly clear that entire sections of vineyards that were planted on this rootstock are going to have to be replanted in the very near future. It seems fairly likely that whatever is causing this massive failure of the rootstock is related to climate change, for it is not just parcels like the Mugneret family's section of replanted Ruchottes-Chambertin that have now reached twenty years of age that are dying, but even very young parcels planted on 161/49C, such as a plot of Antoine Jobard's Meursault "Genevrières", which he only replanted in 2017!

At the moment, no one in the vineyards and nurseries of Burgundy are sure which is the best replacement option for the 161/49C rootstock, as this had been considered the very finest quality choice available for a generation. The high percentage of limestone in the soils of Burgundy precludes some potential rootstocks from even being considered, and everything that has been known about each potential replacement rootstock now has to be reexamined in the wake of what the last ten years of climate change has done to 161/49C. It seems most likely that when the parcels planted on 161/49C eventually have to be dug up and replanted, producers are likely to select a few different rootstocks to plant on, so that they do not face the same type of risk that they are now suffering from with all their new plantings grafted onto 161/49C. How this will eventually affect the quality and personality of some of Burgundy's greatest wines remains to be seen, but the immediate effect is going to be that twenty or twenty-five years' worth of vine maturity is going to have to be sacrificed across a very wide swath of vineyard parcels in the Côte d'Or in the very near future, as the parcels planted on 161/49C are clearly failing in our present weather patterns for the region, and it seems highly unlikely that climate change is going to be addressed in any meaningful way at the corporate or governmental level to protect the planet. Consequently, many of the world's rarest cuvées are about to see their production levels drop even further in the next few years, as so many *vignerons* have to take the unpalatable decision to grub up these parcels of vines that should be just entering their primes, because the 161/49C rootstock is failing in our current climate crisis.

The following notes on the 2019 Burgundy vintage are organized in my customary manner, geographically from north to south, starting in Chablis and ending up in Mercurey. I will be writing my regular spring feature on the wines of the Mâconnais and Côte Chalonnaise in Issue 98, so I have not included the vast majority of estates from those two regions in the following report. The only exception to that is Domaine Michel Juillot in Mercurey, as I had intended to visit the domaine on my November and December trip to taste the 2020s in barrel, but could not figure out a way to squeeze a trip down to Mercurey into my ridiculously packed tasting schedule on that two and a half week stretch in the region. But, given that the Juillot family's 2019s are currently available in the market, and I absolutely love the quality of the wines being produced here these days, I have added them to this report, rather than holding them back for the Mâconnais and Côte Chalonnaise feature in the following issue (hoping that the notes appearing sooner will be more useful for savvy Burgundy shoppers looking to tuck some of their 2019s away in their cellars). As I mentioned above, this report includes plenty of notes on wines tasted out of bottle back here in New York, rather than on my trip to Burgundy at the end of this past year. I have simply slotted the wines tasted in bottle into the same geographical organization as the wines tasted at the domaines while on the road in the region, so readers will find some domaine sections in the tasting notes where only one or two wines might be reported upon, if that was all I received as samples of here in New York.

Chablis

Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin et Fils (La Chapelle Vaupelteigne)

The Bessin family started picking on September 10th in 2019, aiming to bring in wines that still had classic underlying Chablisienne minerality and good acidity. The Vieilles Vignes bottling shows a bit of the plump, ripe fruit and early generosity of the vintage, but the 2019 La Pièce au Comte and Valmur are a bit more structured out of the blocks and will repay a few years of cellaring with fine dividends. These are lovely wines in 2019.

2019 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin et Fils

The 2019 old vine bottling of Chablis from the Bessin family is beautifully forward and succulent from the outset and will be a difficult wine not to drink with abandon in its relative youth, though it certainly possesses the balance to also age quite well. The lovely bouquet shows bright and nicely ripe fruit tones of pear, tangerine, chalk and a nice touch of wet stone minerality, dried flowers and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and wide open in personality, with a plush core of fruit, good mineral undertow, zesty acids and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2022-2040+. **90.**

2019 Chablis Fourchaume “La Pièce au Comte”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin et Fils

The 2019 La Pièce au Comte from Romain Bessin is an excellent bottle, with impressive structural snap and bounce and the need for at least a few years of bottle age to let the wine fully blossom. The deep and vibrant bouquet delivers scents of apple, pear, orange zest, a beautiful array of floral tones, wet stone minerality and a hint of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and sports excellent mid-palate depth, with bright acids, fine focus and cut and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. A lovely wine. 2025-2055. **93.**

2010 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin et Fils

I love the Bessin family’s bottling of Valmur and the 2019 version is another outstanding example of this stellar *terroir*. The aromatic constellation jumps from the glass in a ripe and refined blend of apple, pear, paraffin, limestone minerality, dried flowers, just a hint of honeycomb and a beautiful topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, crisp and full, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb mineral drive and grip, vibrant acids and laser-like focus on the long and nascently complex finish. First class Valmur in the making! 2026-2060. **95.**

Domaine Marc Cameron (Tonnerre)

2018 Bourgogne Epeneuil “Sagara”- Domaine Marc Cameron

The 2018 Bourgogne Epeneuil “Sagara” from Marc Cameron is made from ten year-old pinot noir vines, which Marc raises in a combination of stainless steel tank and Burgundy casks. The wine shows a nice touch of new oak for a Bourgogne bottling, offering up a fine nose of black cherries, dark chocolate, bonfire, a bit of gamebird, chalky soil tones and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really quite serious for Bourgogne, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature and lovely focus and balance on the long and gently tannic finish. This is one Bourgogne rouge bottling that will not demand some cellaring before it blossoms, as it is already very tasty. Good juice. 2022-2035. **88.**

Domaine Dampt Frères (Collan)

I received a generous handful of bottles of 2019s and 2020s from Domaine Dampt Frères from their New York importer right before I finished up this article. There will be more 2020s in a month or so, as most of the wines from the vintage from the domaine have not yet shipped, but I was able to get a few early preview bottles. I was very happy to be able to cover a few more of this fine estate's wines here, as I have really liked what I have tasted from the domaine in the last few vintages. All seven wines I tasted for this report were excellent and very much in align with their respective appellations. In particular, the 2019 Bougros was most impressive, as this is a very lovely, mineral-infused and quite racy example of the vintage. Vincent Dauvissat's observation that the low yields of 2019 really enhanced the underlying expression of minerality in the wines from this solar vintage rang quite true as I tasted this wine, which has excellent cut and soil definition. The 2020s from the Dampt brothers are utterly classical in profile, as one would expect from this truly exceptional vintage in Chablis.



2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “Chevalier d’Eon”- Domaine Dampt Frères

The 2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “Chevalier d’Eon” from the Dampt brothers is a lovely bottle of chardonnay that really shows its *Chablisienne* origins, as it has a beautiful mineral foundation. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a very expressive blend of pear, lemon, chalky minerality, a touch of orange peel and a topnote of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is

bright, zesty and full, with a good core, excellent soil undertow and grip, bouncy acids and impressive length and grip on the complex finish. This is an outstanding value! 2022-2030. **90.**

2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “le Clos du Château”- Domaine Damp Frères

The 2020 Bourgogne Tonnerre “le Clos du Château” from Damp 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.**

2020 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Damp Frères

The 2020 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes” from Domaine Damp Frères is absolutely classic in style, as one would expect from this exceptional vintage in Chablis. The bouquet is bright, focused and minerally, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of green apple, lime, wet stone minerality, straw, chalk and a touch of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and racy in profile, with a fine core, excellent mineral undertow, lovely balance and grip and a long, complex and bouncy finish. Fine juice. 2022-2045+. **91.**

2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Damp Frères

The 2020 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre” from Domaine Damp Frères is a very fine example of this great *terroir*. The bouquet is deep and classy, jumping from the glass in a vibrant blend of lemon, pear, a touch of sweet grapefruit, a beautifully complex base of limestone minerality, a touch of paraffin, white flowers and a whisper of anise in the upper register. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core of fruit, lovely soil signature and grip, bright acids and excellent balance on the long and energetic finish. This is a very fine bottle of Montée de Tonnerre that is quite approachable already, but really deserves at least three to five years in the cellar to really let it blossom. First class juice. 2025-2055. **93.**

2020 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Damp Frères

The Damp brothers have crafted an absolutely superb bottle of les Preuses in 2020. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of apple, pear, wet stone minerality, oyster shell, beeswax, dried flowers and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and youthful, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb mineral drive and cut, bright acids and impeccable balance on the long, complex and utterly classical finish. This is a great bottle in the making. 2026-2065. **95.**

2019 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine Damp Frères

I do not know where the Damp brothers have their vines situated in Bougros, but it would seem that it might be down close to the Côte de Bouguerots section of Domaine William Fèvre, which is lower down on the slope in Bougros and tends to produce more mineral interpretations of the vineyard, which is also the case for this lovely Bougros from Damp Frères. This is a very svelte example of the 2019 vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering up a minerally-infused, vibrant bouquet of green apple, lemon, wet stone minerality, a touch of oyster shell and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and soil-driven, with a fine core of fruit, bright, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and very well-balanced finish. This is an excellent wine. 2022-2050. **93+.**

2019 Bourgogne Pinot Noir “Chevalier d’Eon”- Domaine Damp Frères

This is the first pinot noir I have tasted from the Damp brothers and it is really quite good. It comes in at 12.5 percent octane and offers up a quite sophisticated bouquet of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones and just a touch of cedar in the upper

register. On the palate the wine is bright, medium-full and youthful, with a good core and soil signature, moderate tannins and a long, adolescent finish. Like many examples of Bourgogne rouge, this will need a few years in the cellar to soften up its tannins before it drinks with generosity, but there are good raw materials here. 2026-2040. **87.**

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat (Chablis)

Vincent Dauvissat's 2019s are excellent wines, with riper and more buxom personalities than his utterly classical collection of 2020s, but with these generous fruit tones coupled to exceptional underlying minerality, good acids and plenty of precision. While I did not write down the exact alcohol levels of the 2019s during my visit in early December to the domaine, my recollection is that the wines were typically at least a half point higher in octane than their corresponding 2020 cuvée, which would most likely make the 2019s fall within a range of 13.5 to fourteen percent alcohol. However, one does not get any sense of blowsiness or more overtly tropical fruit tones in the 2019s, just plenty of deep, generous fruit and lovely minerality from the lower yields of the vintage. The 2019s are certainly more forward in personality than the 2020s and will drink quite nicely from the outset, much like the 2018s here, with only the grand crus really wines that will demand a bit of bottle age before they start to drink with generosity. Within the range of premier crus, I would try to at least give the 2019 Montée de Tonnerre and la Forest a couple of years in the cellar, just to let their secondary layers emerge completely, but none of these wines are going to need too much bottle age before they start to hit on all cylinders.

2019 Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2019 Chablis AC from Domaine Dauvissat is a lovely example of the vintage. The bouquet is bright and wide open already, offering up scents of apple, pear, oyster shell minerality, beeswax and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and succulent in personality, with a good core, lovely acids and fine soil signature on the long finish. Good juice. 2022-2040. **89+.**

2019 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2019 Chablis “Séchet” from Monsieur Dauvissat is another excellent wine, and this is one of the premier crus here that I feel would not be criminal to drink right out of the blocks, as though there is certainly more to come here if the wine is given bottle age, it is already quite delicious. The nose delivers scents of pear, apple, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, apple blossom, a hint of vanillin oak and a topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused, zesty and has lovely mid-palate depth, with good mineral undertow, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and very well balanced finish. Just a lovely wine. 2022-2050. **91+.**

2019 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The Dauvissat family's 2019 Vaillons is another very strong bottle in the making. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, pear, a touch of candied lemon peel, chalky minerality, a hint of straw, vanillin oak, beeswax and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and bouncy, with a superb core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, good acids and fine complexity on the long, focused and vibrant finish. Fine juice. 2022-2050. **91+.**

2019 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2019 Montée de Tonnerre *chez* Dauvissat is a superb wine. The bouquet is precise, deep and complex, offering up scents of pear, apple, paraffin, a complex base of limestone minerality, a hint of pastry cream, white lilies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright,

full-bodied and plush on the attack, with excellent depth at the core, a fine girdle of acidity, excellent focus and grip and a long, complex and vibrant finish. This is excellent wine. 2024-2060. **93.**

2019 Chablis “la Forest”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2019 Chablis “la Forest” from Domaine Dauvissat is every bit as fine as the Montée de Tonnerre. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of candied lemon peel, pear, a gorgeous base of chalky soil tones, beeswax, white lilies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and zesty, with a beautiful core of fruit, a fine spine of acidity, excellent focus and grip and a long, seamlessly balanced and complex finish. 2024-2060. **93.**

2019 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

Vincent Dauvissat’s 2019 les Preuses is a stunning young wine. The bouquet is deep and complex, jumping from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, a kaleidoscope of limestone minerality, fruit blossoms, paraffin and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and seamless, offering a beautiful core of fruit, great soil signature, vibrant acids and laser-like focus on the long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2026-2070. **95.**

2019 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2019 les Clos from Domaine Dauvissat is equally stunning. The nose is pure, precise and multi-dimensional, offering up scents of lemon, pear, flinty minerality, a touch of oyster shell, beeswax, white lilies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and rock solid at the core, with superb mineral drive, snappy acids, excellent focus and cut and a long, poised and complex finish of impeccable balance and impressive backend lift. Gorgeous. 2026-2070. **96.**

Domaine Christian Moreau (Chablis)

Christian and Fabien Moreau have made a truly exceptional range of 2019s and no one is going to pine for any other vintage here with a glass of one of the Moreau 2019s in front of them! As I mentioned in my article on the 2020 vintage here, both Messieurs Moreau were away on the day of my tasting, but the excellent support staff at the domaine graciously opened up four of the 2019 grand crus for me to taste after we had worked our way through the 2020s out of tank and barrel. The alcohol levels of the 2019s chez Moreau are very classical, with both the Valmur and les Clos coming in at an even thirteen percent, and I assume that the Vaudésir and Clos des Hospices were right around the same mark. The 2019 grand crus here that I tasted are open enough structurally to already be drunk with great pleasure, but they are still fairly primary and certainly more nuance and layered complexity will emerge as the wines are given some bottle age. But, I do not like the odds of a lot of the Domaine Moreau 2019s making it to old age, as they will drink so well early on that a great many people are going to ask themselves what is the point of waiting any longer than it takes to properly chill the bottle!

2019 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2019 Valmur from Domaine Moreau is a perfect example of the vintage here, coming in at an even thirteen percent octane and offering up a good, zesty structural chassis and plenty of incipient charm. The bouquet is a fine blend of pear, apple, a touch of raw almond, chalky soil tones, paraffin and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and well-balanced, with a fine core of nicely ripe fruit, good soil signature, lovely framing acids and a long, poised and complex finish. This has the balance to age very nicely, but it is already quite accessible. 2022-2050. **92+.**



The lower sector of the grand cru vineyard of les Clos, where the Moreau family's Clos des Hospices is located.

2019 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2019 Vaudésir from the Moreau family is another beautiful example of the vintage. It too is already beautifully expressive on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a hint of tangerine, chalky minerality, gentle notes of new oak and a lovely topnote just starting to emerge of candied lemon peel. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with excellent mid-palate depth, fine acids and grip, lovely focus and a long, balanced and vibrant finish. This is complex and classy. 2022-2050. **93.**

2019 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2019 les Clos bottling from Christian Moreau is another stellar example of the vintage. This will deserve at least a couple of years in the cellar to more fully blossom, as it is a touch more reserved in personality than either the Valmur or Vaudésir this year. The nose offers up a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, beeswax, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, white lilies, a touch of oyster shell and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, focused and full-bodied, with a lovely core, a good sense of structural reserve, fine soil signature and grip and a long, snappy and vibrant finish. This really has first class acidity for the 2019 vintage! 2025-2060+. **95.**

2019 Chablis “les Clos” Clos des Hospices- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2020 Clos des Hospices from the Moreau family is another outstanding bottle. The bouquet is still youthfully aligned, but beautifully defined already, offering up scents of green

apple, pear, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, paraffin, citrus peel, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great focus and cut, snappy acids, excellent balance and a very, very long, complex and soil-driven finish. Great juice. 2026-2070. **95+**.

Domaine Servin (Chablis)

François Servin is another Chablis vigneron whose wines I have tasted in the last couple of years here in the states have been consistently impressive and I hope to have the opportunity to visit and taste at the domaine on one of these coming trips to the Burgundy region. The Servin family has extensive holdings, as they now farm just over thirty-six hectares of vines, including four parcels in grand crus and a fine lineup of premier crus as well. They are moving to more and more hand harvesting, so that now all of the grand and premier crus are picked by hand, as well as the Vieilles Vignes bottling of Chablis from the excellent vineyard of Les Pargues. These two 2019s were tasted in New York early in the new year.

2019 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes” Selection Massale- Domaine Servin

The 2019 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes” from François Servin is raised in fifty percent cask and fifty percent stainless steel tank. This bottling hails all from the excellent *lieu à dit* of Les Pargues, which is also where Patrick Piuze’s top *villages* bottling of La Grande Vallée hails from. The Servin family’s vines here are all at least forty-five years of age and were planted with cuttings taken from their best vineyards, hence the *Selection Massale* designation on the label. The wine is nicely low octane in this vintage, coming in at 12.5 percent alcohol and offering up a minerally, complex bouquet of tart orange, green apple, wet stone minerality, a bit of oyster shell, beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral definition and cut, zesty acids and a long, complex and racy finish. This wine is nicely wound and will be even better with a bit of bottle age, just to let the acids relax a bit more and the secondary layers of complexity emerge. Fine juice. 2022-2045. **90**.

2019 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Servin

Domaine Servin’s 2019 Montée de Tonnerre is produced from vines that range from thirty-five to fifty-five years of age and raised entirely in stainless steel tank. The wine is again quite svelte for the vintage, tipping the scales at 12.5 percent and delivering a refined aromatic constellation of lemon, apple, limestone minerality, white flowers, citrus peel and just a hint of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and classically proportioned, with a full body, excellent core, snappy acids and a very long, complex, mineral-driven and well-balanced finish. This is excellent, but I would give it a few years in the cellar to unwind. 2024-2050. **92**.

Domaine Testut (Chablis)

I only tasted one sample of the 2019 vintage from Cyril Testut for this report, but it was his beautiful example of Montée de Tonnerre! Monsieur Testut harvests all of his premier and grand cru vineyards by hand, as well as most of his “villages” level vineyards as well. He has lots of old vines, with his parcel in Montée de Tonnerre now more than sixty years of age. He is one of the really good, unknown stars in the region and his wines currently still represent excellent value, which is not something always easy to say about Burgundy these days.

2019 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Testut

The 2019 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre” from Cyril Testut is an excellent example of the vintage, coming in at thirteen percent octane and offering plenty of mineral drive to underpin its lovely fruit. The beautifully complex bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, tart orange, dried flowers, limestone minerality, paraffin, lime zest and just a touch of oyster shell in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with excellent mineral drive, a good core of fruit, sound framing acids and a long, well-balanced and classy finish. This is a fine bottle of 2019 Chablis, with an open, generous personality out of the blocks, but also with the balance to age very nicely. 2022-2040. 92.



Marsannay

Domaine Collotte

Philippe Collotte and his daughter Isabella have a great many parcels of old vines in the village of Marsannay, with most of their cuvées produced from vines in excess of fifty years of age. The bunches are destemmed here, the wines are all fermented with indigenous yeasts and are given a bit of new oak prior to being bottled unfiltered for their American importer, Peter Weygandt. The 2019s here are excellent examples of the vintage, offering noteworthy purity and elegance in this vintage, with ripe, seamless tannins, excellent fruit tones and impressive soil signature across the board. All of the reds come in listed at thirteen or 13.5 percent in this vintage and one has the sense that this is quite accurate, rather than the more polite version of

just under fourteen percent. These are Marsannays built for a bit of cellaring, as the 2019s are fairly tightly-knit out of the blocks, pure, transparent and show fine-grained tannins; given five to seven years in the cellar, they should start to drink superbly well and offer up very, very impressive value!

2019 Marsannay Blanc- Domaine Collotte

The *villages* level bottling of Marsannay Blanc from the Collotte family is made from chardonnay vines that range from thirty to forty years of age. Isabella Collotte chooses to raise this wine in ten percent new oak, as the white wines at the domaine are her specialty these days. The wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane and delivers a fine bouquet of green apple, sweet quince, salty limestone soil, a bit of raw almond, white flowers and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full and nicely defined by its underlying soil signature, with a good core, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long finish. A very good example that will be even better with a bit of bottle age. 2022-2030. **88+**.

2019 Marsannay “les Grasses Têtes”- Domaine Collotte

The les Grasses Têtes bottling is one of the few Marsannays from the Collotte family that is not made from fifty year old vines, but the wine has still turned out beautifully in the 2019 vintage. It comes in listed at 13.5 percent octane and delivers beautiful aromatic purity in its bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core, excellent transparency and backend lift, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, refined and classy finish. This is beautiful wine for the money! 2027-2055. **90**.

2019 Marsannay “les Boivins”- Domaine Collotte

Domaine Collotte’s 2019 les Boivins was raised in twenty-five percent new oak in this vintage and tips the scales at 13.5 percent alcohol. These vines are all at least forty years of age. The 2019 version is excellent on the nose, offering up scents of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, a bit of bonfire and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, focused and full, with an excellent core of black fruit, superb soil undertow and grip, ripe, nicely integrated tannins and a long, well balanced and classy finish. This is a bit more structured out of the blocks than the les Grasses Têtes bottling and will demand a bit more cellaring, but it is going to be superb wine. 2029-2055+. **90**.

2019 Marsannay “en Combereau”- Domaine Collotte

The Collotte family’s bottling of en Combereau is made from vines that are all at least fifty years of age, and these old vines have come in a touch lower in alcohol in this vintage, being listed at an even thirteen percent. The wine is again raised in approximately twenty percent new oak and wafts from the glass in a beautifully complex blend of red and black cherries, smoked meats, a touch of pomegranate, lovely minerality, gentle notes of cocoa powder, a svelte framing of new oak and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with excellent mineral drive and backend lift, a lovely core of red fruit, impressive complexity and a long, ripely tannic and vibrant finish. This is outstanding juice. 2029-2065. **91+**.

2019 Marsannay “le Clos de Jeu”- Domaine Collotte

Philippe and Isabella Collotte’s Clos de Jeu bottling is produced from fifty year-old vines and is raised in twenty-five percent new oak. The 2019 Clos de Jeu also comes in at a svelte thirteen percent octane in this solar vintage and delivers fine aromatic complexity in its constellation of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, a bit of smoked meats, gentle

notes of mustard seed and a dollop of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and nicely meaty in personality, with a good core, excellent soil signature and grip, ripe tannins and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. This is one of the top *lieux à dits* in Marsannay and the wine is properly structured out of the blocks as a result, so give it some cellaring time before starting to drink it. This is first rate Marsannay! 2028-2055+. **91+**.

2019 Fixin “les Crais de Chêne”- Domaine Collotte

Domaine Collotte’s 2019 les Crais de Chêne is a very elegant rendition of young Fixin. Like most of the Marsannays *chez* Collotte, the vines here are at least forty years of age as well, with the wine aged in thirty percent new oak and tipping the scales this year at thirteen percent octane. The bouquet is bright and nicely red fruity for Fixin in a solar vintage, offering up scents of cherries, red berries, a hint of blood orange, roasted *pigeon*, mustard seed, coffee bean, cedar and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and ripely tannic, with a fine core of fruit, lovely transparency and grip, impressive focus and a long, youthful and very promising finish. This will take even a couple more years in the cellar than the top Marsannays here, but will be a fine bottle once it is really ready to drink. 2032-2065. **91**.



Gevrey-Chambertin

Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

I had a chance to taste a couple of 2019s from the Burguet brothers during my trip to Burgundy in November and liked both wines quite well, though I did not have the opportunity to ask about when they started picking or the relative alcohol levels of the two wines tasted. I have been a big fan of the Burguet family’s wines ever since I first drank a bottle of Alain Burguet’s 1990 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes” when the vintage was first shipped to the states, and have followed the family domaine ever since. But the Burguet family have been fans of late harvesting for decades now and sometimes I worry that this approach may not be the most beneficial for the ultimate quality of the wines, now that we have reached such a point of extreme

climate change. So, I was worried about the potential style and octane level of the 2019s here, prior to tasting them, given how hot the summer was in Burgundy. But, my fears proved groundless and both 2019s were excellent examples of the vintage.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée Symphonie”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The 2019 Cuvée Symphonie from the Burguet brothers is a fine young bottle of Gevrey. The bouquet is ripe and nicely black fruity in profile in this vintage, delivering a blend of black cherries, plums, grilled meats, dark chocolate, a lovely base of soil, woodsmoke and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and already nicely velvety on the attack, with a plush core of fruit, suave, buried tannins and a long, complex and very well balanced finish. This is excellent and already fairly approachable out of the blocks. 2022-2040+. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Mes Favorites”- Domaine Alain Burguet et Fils

The domaine’s old vine bottling of Mes Favorites is also a superb example of the 2019 vintage. The wine shows some lovely red fruity shadings in the bouquet, offering up scents of red and black cherries, smoked meats, a beautiful base of dark soil tones, cloves, roses, cedar and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, plush and full-bodied, with a superb core of fruit, ripe, seamless tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and classy finish. The 2019 Mes Favorites will want a few years in the cellar to soften up its backend tannins, but should drink very nicely not too far down the road. 2027-2050+. **92**.

Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Philippe Harmand is one of those vigneronns who actually had alcohol levels a tad lower in his 2019s than in his 2020s, with all of his 2019s coming in between thirteen and fourteen percent octane, which is still on the low side for this hot summer. The domaine started picking on September 17th in 2019 and the wines were all bottled between January and the end of March of 2021. Other than the 2019 Bourgogne rouge, the rest of the Harmand-Geoffroy lineup is quite black fruity in personality in this vintage, but then again, this is Gevrey-Chambertin after all, and other than a few vineyards such as les Goulots, black fruit is generally the more typical shadings found in the wines of this commune, until one gets up into the realm of the grand crus. These are very strong 2019s, with depth, purity and good solid structural chassis for cellaring. They will not drink particularly early, as they are quite classically structured in style, but will prove to be excellent wines once they have had sufficient time in the cellar to soften up their underlying tannins and start to drink with generosity.

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy makes a lovely example of Bourgogne rouge and their 2019 is no exception. The nose offers up a lovely, red fruity blend of cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and nicely balanced, with a good core, just a touch of backend tannin and sneaky length and grip on the finish. Good juice. 2024-2040. **89**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 vintage of Gevrey *villages* from the Harmand family is another very good bottle. The wine is deep and quite black fruity, offering up scents of cassis, dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, dark soil tones, a touch of mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is

deep, full-bodied and nicely tangy for the vintage, with a good core, fine focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic finish. This is a fine AC. 2030-2065. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “en Jouise”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Philippe Harmand’s 2019 en Jouise bottling is also very good and quite black fruity in personality this year. The nose offers up a constellation of sweet dark berries, black currant, coffee bean, a fine base of soil tones, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and ripely tannic, with fine mid-palate depth, good soil undertow and lovely balance on the long and promising finish. Good juice. 2030-2065. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

As is the case most years *chez* Harmand, the 2019 Clos Prieur is a very strong wine and an outstanding value. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a mix of cassis, dark berries, a nice touch of licorice, French roast, dark soil tones, grilled meats, a touch of spicy oak and a topnote of cigar smoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with ripe, chewy tannins, good focus and grip and a long, complex and very well balanced finish. This is excellent. 2030-2070+. **91+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

Because of the short yields of 2019, both the Clos Prieur and Vieilles Vignes bottlings were raised in forty percent new oak this year. The Clos Prieur has absorbed this completely, but the old vine Gevrey was still in the process of integrating its wood a bit and consequently was a tad more grumpy at the time I tasted it. The nose is deep and youthfully complex, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, coffee bean, grilled meats, a fine base of soil and a generous serving of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite solid at the core, with good soil signature and ripe tannins; the oak still pokes out a bit on the backend of the long finish, but this is simply a phase and there is little doubt it will integrate nicely with a bit of bottle age. Good juice in the making. 2032-2070. **91**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bossière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bossière” from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is a fine bottle in the making. Again, it is quite black fruity in personality in this vintage, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, woodsmoke, gamebird, a complex base of soil and a nice touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a good core, lovely soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and classy finish. This is not quite as deep as the Clos Prieur bottling, but it is every bit as good- just cut from a more elegant mold. 2030-2070. **91+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Perrière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 la Perrières from Monsieur Harmand is a lovely bottle in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of dark berries, cassis, smoked meats, a lovely foundation of black minerality, coffee bean, woodsmoke and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full-bodied, with a beautifully plush attack, a fine core, lovely soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and very well-balanced finish. A fine, fine bottle in the making. 2033-2085. **93+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 Champeaux was also showing excellent potential at the time of my visit. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up a refined blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, a touch of licorice, grilled meats, dark soil tones, cedary oak, a dollop of bitter chocolate and an exotic topnote of eucalyptus. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with impressive depth and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. There

were only three and a half casks of Champeaux in 2019, with two of the barrels new, so this has around sixty percent new oak this year, but it has already eaten up the wood. Great juice. 2033-2085+. **93+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 Lavaux St. Jacques from Philippe Harmand was one of the last wines bottled in March and it was still in recovery mode at the time of my visit on the first of December, so the wine was still pretty reserved and not particularly interested in being tasted. The bouquet eventually offers up scents of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, a lovely base of soil, cedary and plenty of upper register smokiness, but it is still adolescent and takes some coaxing to reveal these personality traits. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and equally reserved, but with a fine core, good soil undertow and grip, ripe, firm tannins and plenty of length on the backend. I am sure that this wine is going to be superb in due course, but it will need a couple of years more in the cellar than the other premier crus *chez* Harmand to start to stir. 2035-2085. **93+**.

2019 Mazis-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2019 Mazis-Chambertin from Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is a stellar example of the vintage. The deep and classic bouquet offers up a refined blend of cassis, black plums, black cherries, smoked meats, espresso, a beautiful base of black minerality, woodsmoke and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, structured and sappy at the core, with superb mineral drive and grip, ripe, buried tannins, impeccable balance and a long, focused and complex finish. Great juice. 2036-2100+. **96**.



Domaine Henri Magnien et Fils

Domaine Henri Magnien et Fils was only founded in 1987, but this six hectare estate has tons of old vines in its fine lineup of Gevrey premier and grand crus. Charles Magnien took over the reins of the domaine from his father here in 2012. The lineup of Gevrey premier crus is truly enviable, with vineyard parcels that range from seventy to more than one hundred years of age in Cazetiers, Champeaux, Estournelles St. Jacques, Lavaux St. Jacques, as well as a plot in Ruchottes-Chambertin and a bit of Corton as well. These two 2019s were the first wines I had tasted from the domaine and they were both excellent; their California importer had sent them to me, opining that I might like the style and quality and they were absolutely right! The wines are bottled unfined and unfiltered. This is yet another domaine that I will most assuredly have to visit on my next trip to the region. It is starting to look like I would be well-served to just up and move to Burgundy, to save on plane tickets!

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Henri Magnien

The Vieilles Vignes bottling from Charles Magnien hails from vines that range from forty years of age to more than one hundred, as the oldest parcel included here was planted in 1915! The 2019 version comes in at a proper 13.5 percent octane and delivers beautifully pure red fruity aromatics of cherries, strawberries, orange zest, a nice touch of grilled meats, a superb base of soil, cedar and a floral topnote redolent of peonies. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and quite elegant for the vintage, with a lovely core, impressive transparency and grip, ripe, firm tannins and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is still fairly chewy and will need some bottle age, but there are good things in store here for those who tuck this away in their cellars for a decade! 2029-2065. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cazetiers”- Domaine Henri Magnien

The 2019 Cazetiers from Charles Magnien is an outstanding young wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined mix of red and black cherries, plums, smoked meats, mustard seed, a bit of chocolate, a superb base of soil and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, focused and full, with a lovely core of red fruit, ripe, fine-grained tannins, excellent balance and grip and a long, soil-driven and tightly-knit finish. In a ripe year such as 2019, the lovely structure and transparency of the Magnien Cazetiers is most impressive. The wine will need plenty of time to blossom, but it is going to be excellent! 2033-2085. **93**.

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

David and Nicholas Rossignol have crafted a beautifully refined and classical range of 2019s and their wines clearly have to be ranked up at the very summit of successful producers in this vintage. They began harvesting on September 19th in this vintage and chose to include roughly fifty percent whole clusters in most of their cuvées. They report that their octane levels for the vintage range from 13.2 to 13.7 percent, which is really nicely moderate for the 2019 vintage. The resulting wines are lovely, with the same svelte, perfumed and often, quite red fruity personalities as are found at other very successful domaines in this vintage, such as Domaine Mugnier in Chambolle-Musigny. The wines that I tried showed good, ripe tannic structures, very pure fruit tones for the vintage, impeccable soil signatures and the potential to age very nicely for many decades, but with the villages level wines likely to start to show generosity over the next half dozen years or so. The following four 2019s were tasted at the conclusion of our tasting of the 2020 barrel samples at the domaine on the 3rd of December of last year.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2019 Gevrey-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is a fine bottle of *villages*. The stylish nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a delicate touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and suave on the attack, with good sappiness at the core, lovely soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the complex finish. Give this a handful of years to blossom. 2027-2065. **89+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2019 old vine bottling of Gevrey from the Rossignol brothers is also beautifully defined by its bright red fruit tones in this vintage, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of red plums, red and black cherries, mustard seed, pretty spice tones from the whole clusters, a fine base of soil, a touch of oak and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely tangy for the vintage, with a lovely core of fruit, fine focus and complexity, buried tannins and a long, well-balanced and classy finish. Fine juice. 2027-2075. **91**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2019 Petite Chapelle *chez* Rossignol is a beautiful and absolutely classic interpretation of this superb *terroir*. The perfumed bouquet jumps from the glass in a blend of plums, cherries, blood orange, *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil tones, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already quite velvety on the attack, with a sappy core of red fruit, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, balanced, elegant and soil-driven finish. 2033-2085. **93**.

2019 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2019 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is also an outstanding young wine. The refined nose delivers a combination of sweet dark berries, black plums, bitter chocolate, mustard seed, a nice touch of sweet stem tones, dark soil elements, woodsmoke, cedary oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and complex, with an excellent core of fruit, marvelous *typicité* and grip, ripe, suave tannins and impeccable balance on the long, complex and focused finish. Outstanding juice. 2036-2100. **95**.

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 “Pressoniers”- Domaine Joseph Roty

As I have mentioned in the past, the Pressoniers *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+**.

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’s 2019s are utterly beautiful wines, at least the four that I had the pleasure to taste during my visit here on the 10th of December of last year. Cyrielle recounted that she was so happy when Covid finally eased up enough that visitors could once again come to taste at the domaine, laughing that “I spent a year down here alone in the cellars with these 2019s and could not share them with anyone else and all I wanted to do was see the reactions of others to these wines!” The 2019s chez Rousseau are indeed utterly stunning wines, with the entire vintage coming in between thirteen and fourteen percent octane, which is quite measured by the standards of the solar vintage of 2019. The four cuvées that I tasted are beautifully detailed, deep and sappy wines, with the fruit tones shading more towards the black side of the ledger, ripe, firm tannic undercarriages and impeccable balances. They will need a fair bit of bottle age to start to stir (but, of course, these are the top four cuvées in the family’s tar-studded

lineup of vineyards, so one would expect them to be built for the longer haul); they will age long and gracefully and prove to be great, great wines once they are fully ready to drink.

2019 Ruchottes-Chambertin “Clos des Ruchottes”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2019 Clos des Ruchottes is a superb wine. The bouquet is already beautifully expressive, offering up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, chocolate, a superbly complex base of soil tones and a lovely framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and nicely structured out of the blocks, with ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This has a plush core of fruit waiting in the wings, but it will demand a fair bit of time in the cellar to allow the tannins to fall away before it starts to drink with generosity. Fine, fine juice. 2032-2085. **94.**



2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

Cyrielle Rousseau’s 2019 Clos St. Jacques is another stunning wine in the making. The youthful bouquet already shows excellent complexity in its constellation of plums, black cherries, grilled meats, a fine, fine base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a fine array of spice tones and a lovely framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and chewy, with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe, well-integrated tannins, excellent soil signature and a very, very long, poised and impeccably balanced finish. A great bottle of Clos St. Jacques. 2033-2090. **95.**

2019 Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2019 vintage of Chambertin from Domaine Rousseau is a perfect synthesis of power and elegance. The bouquet is still quite primary, but offers up a refined blend of black cherries,

sweet dark berries, espresso, a fabulously complex base of soil, grilled meats, cedary oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full, with a sappy core of fruit, stunning transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, very complex finish. All this magical wine needs is time in the cellar to reach its cruising altitude! 2035-2100. **96+**.

2019 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The Rousseau family’s Clos de Bèze is equally brilliant in 2019. The wine is always a touch more exotic out of the blocks than the Chambertin here and this is again the case in this vintage. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a blaze of sappy black cherries, black raspberries, black minerality, smoked meats, dark chocolate, cedary oak and a touch of black tea in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with great depth at the core, superb complexity and mineral drive, firm, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and focused finish. A great wine by any measure. 2036-2100. **96+**.

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

While there is a lot of higher alcohol, baked fruit types of reds to be found in the 2019 vintage, one will not find any wines of that sort under the Trapet family’s roof, as their 2019s are among the finest red wines to be found anywhere in this vintage. The wines are uniformly more red fruity in profile than is generally the case with the Trapet family’s superb 2020s, but the 2019s are loaded with personality, plenty of soil signature, svelte, beautifully refined palate impressions and suave structural chassis that will allow them to age long and gracefully- often while providing some early accessibility at the lower level appellations. Domaine Trapet has been on quite a hot streak for the last decade or two and these 2019s clearly confirm that this is one of the very, very finest addresses to be found anywhere in the Côte de Nuits!

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2019 Gevrey AC from the Trapet family is a lovely example of the vintage, coming in at a quite measured (for this vintage) 13.5 percent octane. It offers up a bright and perfumed nose of red and black cherries, grilled *pigeon*, mustard seed, a fine base of soil tones, woodsmoke and just a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a good core of fruit, fine soil undertow, moderate tannins and a long, complex and promising finish. This has that slightly baked fruit character of the vintage, but this is nicely balanced by fresh fruit tones as well, much like the young 1982 Bordeaux had back in the day. A good *villages*. 2027-2060. **89**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Ostrea”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I did not taste the Ostrea bottling in 2020, but the 2019 version is very good. The wine is far more precise on the nose than the straight Gevrey AC, offering up notes of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, grilled meats, dark soil tones, a touch of stem tones, woodsmoke and a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good core of fruit, fine focus and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. This will need a few more years in the cellar than the straight Gevrey, but it will be the more complete wine once it opens up and starts to drink with generosity. 2029-2065. **90+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cuvée 1859”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

This is a new bottling from Domaine Trapet, which was bottled on its own in this vintage on the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of the parcel’s purchase by the first generation of Trapet *vignerons* in Gevrey in 1859. The vines here today are all in excess of fifty years of age.

The wine has a special label and is sealed with green wax to make it easy to spot on the shelf (where I guarantee it will not stay long!). The wine is absolutely stellar in 2019, offering up outstanding purity in its aromatic constellation of cherries, red plums, *pigeon*, beautiful spice tones of fresh nutmeg and cardamom (from whole clusters), woodsmoke, a dollop of fresh thyme and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is elegant, full-bodied, focused and suavely tannic, with excellent acids for the vintage, a plush core of red fruit, beautiful soil inflection, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is premier cru quality without a doubt in 2019; I hope the Trapet family continues to make this bottling every year, as it is a stellar new addition to their lineup! 2027-2075. **93.**

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2019 vintage of Clos Prieur *chez* Trapet is truly a beautiful wine in the making, with a superb sense of freshness and precision to its fruit component and excellent soil signature. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful blend of red plums, black cherries, just a touch of dark berry, a gentle note of raw cocoa, dark soil tones, gamebird, a touch of chicory, sweet stem tones, woodsmoke and a deft framing of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, vibrant and complex, with its full-bodied format showing lovely depth at the core, excellent transparency and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is excellent young wine. 2033-2100. **93.**

2019 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Jean-Louis Trapet's 2019 Chapelle-Chambertin is one of the great wines of the vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering classic aromatic and flavor profiles, superb depth, impeccable balance and lovely structure for long term aging. The utterly refined bouquet hops from the glass in a mix of cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, a gorgeous base of soil, *pigeon*, mustard seed, a touch of sweet stem tones and a suave foundation of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and structured, with a great core of fruit, superb transparency and grip, firm, ripe tannins and a long, complex and very classy finish. This is a proper example of Chapelle and will need plenty of bottle age to start to drink with generosity, but it is one of the stars of 2019. 2035-2100. **95.**

2019 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2019 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Trapet is a stunning young wine in the making, with a purity and freshness of fruit that are really quite rare in this warm vintage. The bouquet is deep and complex, wafting from the glass in a refined mix of sweet dark berries, black cherries, coffee bean, grilled meats, a beautifully complex base of dark minerality, just a touch of spice from whole clusters, mustard seed, black tea, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, young and full, with impeccable focus and balance, a lovely core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and a very long, complex and utterly superb finish. This wine will have a very velvety texture when it is ready to drink. 2035-2100. **95.**

2019 Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The Trapet family's 2019 Chambertin is everything one would expect from a domaine at the very top of its game. There is a load of beautiful red fruit in the wine in this vintage, with its aromatic constellation comprised of red plum, cherries, strawberries, grilled meats, just a hint of cigar wrapper, a gorgeously complex base of soil, woodsmoke and a nice framing of cedary oak that hints at lead pencil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and structured, with an excellent core of fruit, lovely balance and grip, superb soil signature and a long, young and extremely promising finish. Thirty years down the road, this is going to be a legend. 2035-2100. **96.**



Morey St. Denis Domaine Dujac

In early December, Jeremy Seysses kindly opened up a nicely representative half dozen examples of the 2019 vintage, after we had finished working through the range of 2020s at Domaine Dujac. I did not write down the dates of harvest for the 2019 vintage at Domaine Dujac (as again, this was one of those tastings that was starting to run on the late side after all of the 2020s preceding these 2019s). The Domaine Dujac 2019s are stylistically quite a bit more classical in aromatic and flavor profiles than their corresponding 2020 (as the latter vintage is very black fruity in profile), with far more red fruity tones in the 2019 wines one often expects to shade in this direction (such as the Chambolle AC, Combottes and Charmes-Chambertin). The 2019s at Domaine Dujac (or at least the range that I tasted) will start to drink sooner by at least a handful of years than their comparable 2020 cuvée, and will also age beautifully, based on their impeccable sense of balance and lovely, measured ripeness. They generally do not show the same “baked fruit” sheen of many other 2019 red wines, as they seem, at this point in time, more fresh and precise in their fruit aromatics and flavors and seem to have been picked at precisely the correct time to maximize their potential quality. The 2019s were all bottled at their more customary time (as opposed to the earlier bottling dates of the 2020s) of between January and March of 2021 and were showing superbly well at the time of my visit in early December of last year.

2019 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Dujac

This is the estate bottling of Chambolle *villages*, rather than the Dujac Fils et Père bottling. The wine is very pretty in 2019, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, a nice touch of raw cocoa and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and succulent at the core, with tangy acids, lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, round finish. This will need a few years to blossom completely and will be a fine example. 2026-2055. **90.**

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Dujac

The 2019 Combottes from Domaine Dujac is a very refined, classically proportioned example of the vintage. The wine delivers a superb aromatic panoply of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, lovely soil tones, a hint of mustard seed, rose petals and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, refined and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, suave, buried tannins, excellent focus and balance and a long, complex and elegant finish. This is a quintessentially refined bottle of Combottes. 2030-2080. **93.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée “Beaux Monts”- Domaine Dujac

The higher altitude Beaux Monts premier cru is usually quite black fruity in profile, no matter the style of the vintage, and this is again true for this lovely 2019 version. The nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of dark berries, black cherries, venison, dark soil tones, espresso, nutty new oak and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows both a fine core and lovely soil undertow. The finish is long, focused and ripely tannic, with fine balance and plenty of potential. 2030-2080. **92+.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Dujac

In some vintages, Domaine Dujac’s Malconsorts bottling is all red fruit, but in the warmer summer of 2019, there is a nice mix of both red and black fruit tones in evidence here. The bouquet offers up a refined blend of black raspberries, plums, duck, a complex base of soil, raw cocoa, woodsmoke and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, pure on the attack and nicely structured on the backend, with a fine core of fruit, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. Fine juice in the making, but patience will be required, as this is not one of the more forward premier crus to be found in the vintage. 2032-2080+. **94.**

2019 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

The 2019 Charmes-Chambertin from Domaine Dujac is another excellent bottle. The bouquet is beautifully red fruity this year, offering up scents of wild strawberries, cherries, red plums, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke, complex soil tones, roses and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with a very good core of fruit, fine is another excellent bottle. The bouquet is beautifully red fruity this year, offering up scents of wild strawberries, cherries, red plums, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke, complex soil tones, roses and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with a very good core of fruit, fine *typicité* and bounce, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and elegant finish. A beautiful bottle of Charmes. 2033-2095. **94+.**

2019 Echézeaux- Domaine Dujac

I have the impression that the domaine’s bottling of Echézeaux is getting better and better with each passing vintage, but this may just be a reflection of my paying closer and closer attention to the wine these days. Looking back on this wine in the vintages of the ‘80s and ‘90s, I always felt that it was a nicely meaty, robust example of Echézeaux, but not quite as refined an expression of the vineyard as were the domaine’s Clos St. Denis or Clos de la Roche for their

respective *terroirs*. But, this has not been my view of the wine in the last decade or so of vintages and this is now one of my favorite examples of Echézeaux. The 2019 is excellent, offering up a nicely red fruity bouquet of red plums, cherries, raspberries, beautiful Vosne spice tones, a beautiful base of soil, rose petals and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine transparency and grip, suave, buried tannins, lovely focus and a long, complex and very classy finish. Fine, elegant juice. 2033-2095. **94+**.



Domaine Taupenot-Merme (Morey St. Denis)

Romain Taupenot is another producer who has made a lovely and very refined set of 2019s, cut much along the svelte, succulent and seamlessly structured style of other vigneron such as Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier and Cyrielle Rousseau. Like several other of the most successful producers of red wines in 2019, Monsieur Taupenot's range in this vintage is beautifully defined by generous red fruit tones, fine soil signatures, buried tannins and lovely balances to carry the wines very nicely for several decades. The wines are generally much more red fruity in 2019 than their counterparts from 2020 chez Taupenot, with a bit less acidity, rounder tannins and the potential to drink with generosity quite a bit sooner than the latter vintage. I did not write down comparisons of alcohol levels between the 2019s and 2020s here, but my general impression that the two vintages are pretty comparable in octane level, with perhaps a few of the higher octane outliers of 2020 (such as the Corton "Rognet") coming in ahead of its 2019 corresponding wine (though the 2019 Rognet is also fairly ripe), but in

general, the two vintages seemed pretty similar and I would suspect that the 2019s that I tasted were all around 13.5 percent alcohol. The very pretty, red fruity tones of the vintage from Monsieur Taupenot have a lovely, “baked” fruit tone that is, again, very much reminiscent of many of the 1982 Bordeaux in style, and is most attractively tied to fine underlying soil signatures. 2019 is an excellent vintage from Domaine Taupenot-Merme.

2019 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2019 la Riotte from Romain Taupenot is very much emblematic of his range of wines from this vintage, redolent with lovely red fruity tones, plenty of underlying soil and suave, seamless structure to reward aging. The stylish bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of cherries, red plums, venison, coffee, a fine base of dark soil tones, bonfire and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with fine transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and nicely balanced finish. Fine juice. 2027-2060. **92.**

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2019 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air” from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is another very fine example of the vintage. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of strawberries, cherries, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, cedar and a slightly exotic (for young Gevrey) topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already getting velvety on the attack, with a sappy core, ripe, buried tannins, fine focus and balance and a long, complex and quite stylish finish. 2027-2060. **92.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2019 Pruliers from Monsieur Taupenot is another fine effort. The bouquet is deep and nascently complex, delivering notes of baked cherries and plums, venison, complex soil elements, bonfire, coffee, cedar and again, a touch of upper register lavender that is most attractive. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very elegantly balanced out of the blocks (not always the case for a young Pruliers!), with excellent mid-palate depth, ripe tannins and a long, focused and nascently complex finish. This will need a few more years in the cellar than the other two premier crus I tasted before it is fully ready to drink, but it too is a very successful example of the vintage. 2031-2075+. **92.**

2019 Corton “Rognet”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The *lieu à dit* of Rognet is one of the warmest microclimates on the hill of Corton and this comes through in the 2019 version from Domaine Taupenot-Merme, though my gut instinct is that this is a touch lower in octane than the 2020 version. The bouquet of the 2019 is young and very classic in profile, offering up scents of red currants, cherries, Corton spices, a deep base of soil, roasted venison, a nice touch of spicy oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly powerful in personality, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, ripe, firm tannins and perhaps just a whisper of backend heat currently poking out on the long finish. Good juice in the making, but patience will be required. 2033-2085+. **92.**

2019 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

Romain Taupenot’s 2019 Charmes-Chambertin is an excellent wine in the making and not cut from the same powerful cloth as the Corton. The bouquet is bright, red fruity and complex, wafting from the glass in a blaze of cherries, blood orange, grilled meats, mustard seed, lavender, coffee and a touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex

and beautifully balanced, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and a long, soil-driven and refined finish. First class Charmes! 2032-2080. **93+**.

2019 Mazoyères-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2019 Mazoyères-Chambertin from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is another excellent wine in the making. The youthfully complex bouquet delivers an array of red and black cherries, roasted venison, mustard seed, a beautiful base of soil tones, mustard seed and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off excellent mid-palate depth of sappy fruit, with fine focus and balance, ripe, seamless tannins, impressive complexity and a very long, very complete finish. The Mazoyères here can often be quite black fruity in personality when it is young, but the 2019 version is redolent in the red fruit that Romain's wines have found in this vintage. Fine, fine juice. 2032-2080. **93+**.



Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Jacques-Frédéric-Mugnier

“Do you prefer great vintages, or delicious vintages” asked Jacques-Frédéric-Mugnier, just before opening the first of his 2019s at our tasting. “For, 2019 is a delicious vintage.” As Monsieur Mugnier noted, other than the couple of heat spikes, one in June and one in July, that set record high temperature marks in France, the growing season of 2019 was just about average in temperature and the harvest began at its more customary time around the third week of September. This contrasts with the late August completion of picking the following year of

2020. He has certainly made some of the finest 2019 reds that I tasted during my two and a half week trip to Burgundy in December of last year, with the wines svelte, perfumed and beautifully refined on both the nose and palate.

2019 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 Chambolle AC *chez* Mugnier is a fine bottle in the making. The already quite perfumed bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of red plums, cherries, cocoa powder, chalky soil tones, mustard seed, gamebird, a touch of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, velvety and nicely plump at the core, with a full-bodied format, fine focus and grip, good soil undertow and a long, moderately tannic and well-balanced finish. This will be a very tasty bottle with only a few years in the cellar, but will have not troubles aging gracefully as well, as it is impeccably balanced. 2026-2060. **91.**

2019 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 les Fuées from Monsieur Mugnier has just a touch of black fruit to go along with the vintage’s lovely red fruit tones and is a fine bottle in the making. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, baked plums, chocolate, lovely spice tones, *pigeon*, a fine base of soil, peonies and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. A lovely example of the vintage. 2028-2075. **93.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 Clos de la Maréchale is one of the most black fruity wines in the domaine’s lineup that I tasted during my visit here at the end of November. The nose delivers a very promising blend of black cherries, dark berries, bonfire, roasted venison, nutskin, a fine base of dark soil tones, a touch of fresh herbs and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite precise in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, ripe, seamless tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2032-2075. **93.**

2019 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine Mugnier also has some lovely black fruity tones to it this year. The bouquet delivers a refined blend of black cherries, dark berries, *pigeon*, nutskin, bonfire, a complex base of chalky soil tones, mustard seed and a refined framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off excellent depth in the mid-palate, with fine transparency and grip, ripe, firm tannins, excellent balance and a long, complex and quite classically-proportioned finish. This will be very much a long-distance runner by the standards of the 2109 vintage. A fine, fine example of Bonnes-Mares in the making. 2035-2100. **96.**

2019 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 les Amoureuses from Monsieur Mugnier is another absolutely stellar wine in the making, and I imagine that thirty years down the road, collectors are still going to have just as much difficulty choosing a favorite between the 2019 and 2020 versions of this beautiful bottling! The bouquet is deep, primary and very, very promising, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, roses, peonies, mustard seed, gamebird, vanillin oak and a simply gorgeous, complex base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and deep at the core, with fine-grained tannins, impeccable balance, lovely sappiness at the core and a very, very long, refined and nascently complex finish. A beautiful wine in the making! 2035-2085+. **97.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale” Blanc- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2019 Clos de la Maréchale Blanc is a very pretty example of the vintage, offering up a ripe and complex bouquet of peach, pear, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature and complex, lovely framing acids and fine focus and grip on the wide open and classy finish. This is a lovely wine. 2022-2035. **91.**

Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

I only had the opportunity to taste a pair of wines from François Millet’s penultimate vintage, the 2019, at Domaine du Comte de Vogüé, but both wines were excellent. As one would expect, given the parameters of this hot vintage in Burgundy, both wines were big, ripe and buxom examples of the vintage, but with lovely underlying soil tones and plenty of potential for positive evolution in the cellar.

2019 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2019 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine de Comte de Vogüé is an excellent wine, very much cut in the style of the vintage, but with depth and plenty of complexity to come. The nose wafts from the glass black fruity mix of plums, black cherries, roasted venison, a touch of saddle leather, woodsmoke, a deep base of soil tones and a foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, ripely tannic and plenty of sappy depth at the core, with good soil signature, fine structure and grip and a long, well-balanced and youthful finish. This will need plenty of time to come around, but it will eventually be a fine bottle of Bonnes-Mares- very much in the style of the domaine’s wines since the 1990 vintage. 2035-2100. **94.**

2019 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2019 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes” from the domaine is also a big, ripe and promising wine. The bouquet offers up scents of black raspberries, black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a complex base of chalky, iron-infused soil tones and plenty of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a plush core of fruit, good mineral drive, ripe, firm tannins and a long, well-balanced and chewy finish. Like the Bonnes-Mares, the 2019 Musigny from Comte de Vogüé is going to need plenty of bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2035-2100. **95.**

Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugneret family began harvesting on September 16th in 2019. It is a very short crop chez Mugneret, with average yields across all of the vineyards for the domaine only twenty-seven hectoliters per hectare in 2019. Of the three grand crus in the lineup, the Clos Vougeot was the most prolific in terms of yields, cropping in at thirty-six hectoliters per hectare, but the Ruchottes was only twenty-six and the Echézeaux only twenty hectoliters per hectare in this vintage! The premier crus are not much better. The wines all tend to be right around or just over fourteen percent octane in 2019, with a couple ranging up to 14.4 percent or so, and the Bourgogne, which was picked last, tipping the scales at 14.7 percent alcohol this year- though it does not taste this high at all! The wines are all very good in 2019, with the short crop concentrating the wines a bit in personality, but without any of the underlying soil signatures disappearing in the very pure and deep fruit tones of the vintage. In general, the 2019s here are a pretty black fruity range of wines, with the exception of the Vosne-Romanée AC bottling, which showed some nice

red fruit, but the wines are also vibrant, complex and beautifully balanced in this vintage. These are quite structured 2019s and the wines will need plenty of bottle age to start to blossom properly, but they are fresh, pure and soil-driven at the same time and are going to be great wines once they have had sufficient time in the cellar to soften up their underlying tannins. This is a very successful vintage chez Mugneret, but the wines are stylistically made for those with the patience to give them all of the bottle age that they are going to demand.

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

I could not believe that the 2019 Bourgogne from Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg was really 14.7 percent octane, as the wine is fresh, vibrant and shows absolutely no signs of heat on the finish. The complex nose offers up a fine blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, b8itter chocolate, dark soil tones, violets and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and suave on the attack, with a lovely, plump core of fruit, just a touch of tannin and very good balance on the long finish. This is remarkably good for a red Burgundy tipping the scales at such an octane! 2024-2035. **89.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2019 Vosne-Romanée *villages* from the Mugneret family is a beautiful wine in the making, offering up a complex bouquet of red plums, raspberries, black cherries, cocoa powder, dark soil tones and a svelte touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip, very good balance and a long, complex and very classy finish. 2028-2060. **91.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2019 la Colombière bottling from the domaine is more black fruity than the straight Vosne AC, offering up a complex and meaty aromatic constellation of black cherries, black raspberries, spiced meats, bonfire, dark soil tones, a touch of anise and just a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly broad-shouldered in personality this year, with a rock solid core, fine soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and a long, well-balanced finish. Good juice that comes in at an even fourteen percent alcohol in this vintage and was made from only thirty hectoliters per hectare yields. 2030-2065. **91+.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “au Bas de Combes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The hydric stress between the two heat spikes was most disruptive in the Mugnerets' Nuits parcels, so the Bas de Combes this year was made from miniscule yields of only twenty-two hectoliters per hectare. The same was true for their vines in the premier cru of Chaignots in 2019. The wine has turned out very well, but there will not be a lot of it to go around because of the short crop. The nose offers up scents of sweet dark berries, black plums, venison, coffee bean, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, cedary and a touch of licorice in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy and full, with a lovely core, excellent soil undertow and grip, ripe, buried tannins and fine length on the very well-balanced and complex finish. This is a lovely example of the vintage. 2031-2065. **91.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugnerets' yields in Vignes Rondes were not quite as draconian as in their other parcels in Nuits, but thirty hectoliters per hectare is nothing to write home about. The wine is an even fourteen percent octane and offers up a deep, smoky and meaty nose of cassis, espresso, grilled game, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, ripe and beautifully detailed, with a sappy core, fine soil signature, firm tannins and a long, well-

balanced and promising finish. This will need plenty of bottle age to blossom, but will be an excellent wine in due course. 2034-2080. **92.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The short crop and slightly desiccated berries in Chaignots has produced a powerful version of this wine in 2019, coming in at 14.4 percent octane and offering up plenty of underlying structure. However, the balance is very good indeed and the wine will be excellent with sufficient bottle age. The nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of black plums, dark berries, *pigeon*, bitter chocolate, a fine base of soil, a touch of anise, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine mineral drive and grip, firm, chewy tannins and a long, poised and balanced finish. This is a true long distance runner in 2019. 2035-2080. **92.**

2019 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2019 Feusselottes from the Mugnerets is quite black fruity this year, but also beautifully complex and elegant in profile. The nose delivers scents of black cherries, black plums, gamebird, a beautifully complex base of soil, very pretty spice tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already nicely suave on the attack, with a sappy core, excellent transparency and grip, seamless tannins and lovely balance on the complex and focused finish. Fine, fine juice that will be ready to drink far sooner than the Nuits St. Georges premier crus this year. 2029-2080. **93.**

2019 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2019 Echézeaux is the most aromatically flamboyant example I have ever tasted from Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg, as this wine truly smells like a young vintage of Henri Mayer’s bottling! The beautifully expressive bouquet soars from the glass in a mix of black plums, sweet dark berries, smoked meats, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, bonfire, Vosne spices and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off stunning depth in the mid-palate, with great mineral drive and grip, ripe, beautifully integrated tannins and a long, complex and chewy finish. This will need plenty of cellaring time to fully blossom, but it is going to be a stunning wine once it softens up! 2037-2100. **95.**

2019 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The very short yields in the domaine’s Ruchottes-Chambertin have created a very powerful and structured example in 2019. The bouquet is deep and quite classical in profile, offering up scents of cassis, dark berries, roasted meats, dark soil tones, espresso, bonfires and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with tangy acids, firm tannins and excellent balance on the long and nascently complex finish. This too will need plenty of bottle age before it is ready to drink, but it will be stellar once it is mature. 2037-2100. **94+.**

2019 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The slightly better yields in the Mugnerets’ Clos Vougeot in 2019 have produced a beautiful wine, with beautiful aromatic and flavor complexity, a well-integrated structural chassis and excellent potential for the long haul. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine, black fruity blend of black plums, black cherries, cassis, roasted *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, espresso and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise in profile, with a superb core of fruit, excellent backend mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and lovely length and grip on the poised and well balanced finish. Fine, fine juice that comes in at 14.4 percent in this vintage, but is perfectly balanced at this octane. Like all of the Mugneret

grand crus in 2019, this wine will need plenty of bottle age before it blossoms, but its future is going to be excellent. 2035-2100. 96.



Nuits St. Georges

Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Given how short the 2019 crop was at Domaine Chevillon, I was delighted that Monsieur Chevillon was willing to open one of his 2019s to taste at the end of our lineup of 2020s in November. I did not get details from Bertrand regarding when he started picking in 2019 or what were the relative alcohol levels of these wines, in comparison to his range of 2020s, but the 2019 Roncières was certainly deep, precise and classically balanced and showed no signs of being from a hot vintage.

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Roncières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

I have become more and more a fan of the Roncières bottlings from Domaine Chevillon with the passing years and regret I did not buy more of this cuvée for my own cellar back in the days when I had very good access to the estate’s wines. Back then, I used to principally focus on the “big three” of Cailles, Vaucrains and les St. Georges for my long-term cellaring purchases, and the Chaignots to drink on the younger side, and so missed the opportunity to have a nice supply of mature Roncières in the cellar. But, this premier cru *chez* Chevillon ages brilliantly and

the 2019 is going to be a gorgeous wine in due course. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, nutskin, chocolate, incipient notes of black truffle, a lovely base of soil, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of roses. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and tangy in personality, with a superb core of fruit, lovely soil signature and grip, ripe tannins and a long, well-balanced and classy finish. 2030-2080. **93.**

Maison Edouard Delaunay

Maison Edouard Delaunay is a very old négociant business in Nuits St. Georges that was founded all the way back in 1893. It had ceased to exist for some time, but Laurent Delaunay, the great grandson of the founder, decided to breathe life back into it in 2017. The Delaunay family was originally from the Nantais region of the eastern Loire Valley and offered some Burgundy wines as part of their négociant portfolio prior to 1893. However, Edouard decided to move the family business to Burgundy in that year and specialize in the wines of the Côte d'Or. In 1932, Jean and Marcel Delaunay, the sons of Edouard, moved the family's business offices to Dijon, while retaining cellars in both Nuits St. Georges and Gevrey-Chambertin. The négociant business lasted into the early 1990s, but eventually fell moribund a century after its founding. In 2017, Laurent and his wife, Catherine, both trained oenologists, decided to return to Burgundy from the Languedoc and reestablished Maison Edouard Delaunay. Christophe Briotet is the Chef de Cave for the maison. They have just begun to import their wines into the US and kindly arranged for me to receive a selection of their 2018s, as the 2019s have not yet been shipped into the market. I was very impressed with the range I tasted, which show lovely fidelity to their underlying soil tones, very good, bright fruit (particularly for 2018), classical stylistic sensibilities and a nice, understated framing of cedary oak for the red wines.

2019 Bourgogne Chardonnay “Septembre”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2019 Bourgogne Chardonnay “Septembre” bottling from Maison Delaunay is bright and nicely ripe, in the style of the vintage, offering up a bouquet of apple, fresh pineapple, a nice base of soil tones, a hint of honey and a topnote of citrus zest. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and juicy, with quite good acidity for the vintage, a buxom core of fruit, with good length and grip. Quite respectable for its level. 2022-2025. **87.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2018 Chassagne-Montrachet from Maison Edouard Delaunay comes in listed at thirteen percent alcohol and offers up a quite expressive nose of pineapple, tangerine, a good base of soil tones, orange peel, a bit of buttery new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely balanced, with a bit of a dip in the mid-palate, good acids and grip and a long, wide open finish. This is not overly complex, but it is tasty for current drinking. 2022-2027. **88.**

2019 Bourgogne Pinot Noir “Septembre”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2019 Bourgogne Pinot Noir “Septembre” from Maison Edouard Delaunay is a fine example of its appellation, offering up a bright and youthful bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, a nice bit of soil, mustard seed and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and still fairly tightly-knit, with a nice core and soil tug, a bit of backend tannin and sneaky length on the well-balanced finish. It will want a couple of years to blossom, but will be a fine bottle of Bourgogne when it is ready to drink. 2024-2030. **87+.**

2018 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2018 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes” from Maison Delaunay is an excellent wine. The bouquet is deep and complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, black cherries, bonfire, *pigeon*, coffee bean, a fine base of dark soil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of ripe black fruit, good soil undertow and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and very nicely balanced finish. This is a very good Volnay *villages*! 2026-2060. **91**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2018 Chambolle old vine bottling from Maison Delaunay comes in at 13.5 percent octane in this vintage and is a very stylish example of its appellation. The nose is fairly black fruity for Chambolle, delivering a blend of black plums, dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebird, a hint of anise, lovely soil tones and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and nicely transparent, with a good solid core, gently chewy tannins and good length and grip on the youthful finish. This does not have quite the same mid-palate stuffing as the Volnay, so the tannins are a tad more evident at this early stage and a bit longer cellaring will be required before the wine starts to drink with generosity. But, once it is ready to drink, it will be very good indeed. 2028-2060. **89+**.

2018 Beaune “Grèves”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2018 Beaune “Grèves” from Maison Edouard Delaunay is a lovely example of the vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering up a beautifully red fruity bouquet of cherries, strawberries, gamebird, a fine base of soil, gentle smokiness and a fairly generous serving of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely transparent in personality, with a good core of fruit, fine focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and promising finish. This needs some bottle age to soften up its backend tannins, but it will be a fine bottle in due course. 2030-2075. **91+**.

2018 Pommard “les Fremiers”- Maison Edouard Delaunay

Maison Delaunay’s 2018 Fremiers is a fine example of the vintage, showing plenty of black fruit coupled to a fine base of soil. The wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane (which is quite reasonable for this torrid vintage) and offers up a fine aromatic constellation of black plums, dark berries, raw cocoa, roasted venison, a bit of cola, bonfire, a nice touch of spice tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite elegant in profile for young Pommard, with a good core and soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and fine focus and balance on the long and complex finish. This is not an overly powerful example of Pommard, but in the context of the 2018 vintage, this is a strong attribute! Most impressive. 2030-2080. **92**.

2018 Clos Vougeot- Maison Edouard Delaunay

The 2018 Clos Vougeot from Maison Edouard Delaunay is an excellent example of the vintage, delivering impressive purity and soil foundation on both the nose and palate and none of the slightly overripe fruit tones that can be found in some 2018s. The wine is again only 13.5 percent octane this year and delivers a superb aromatic constellation of plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, grilled venison, a fine base of soil, raw cocoa and a fine framing of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely structured, with ripe, buried tannins, a fine core of fruit, impressive soil undertow and a long, poised and beautifully balanced finish. All this fine example of Clos Vougeot needs is time in the cellar to properly blossom. 2033-2090. **93+**.



Domaine Henri Gouges

As I mentioned in my report on the 2020 vintage, Domaine Gouges took a novel approach to tasting the new vintage when I was in the region in November and December, hosting a walk-around tasting of samples of the 2020s in a big, open room in their new Chambres d'Hôtes located at the winery, and Gregory Gouges had only prepared one of his 2019s to show at the tasting of the 2020s, his lovely Clos des Porrets. By the time I had worked my way down the lineup to the 2019 Clos des Porrets, Gregory was entertaining half a dozen other tasters who had arrived for the tasting as I was finishing up, so I did not get the opportunity to chat with him about the harvesting dates or relative octanes of his range of 2019s. But, the Clos des Porrets was clearly not overripe or particularly buxom in style. I would guess that it came in a touch lower in octane than its counterpart from the 2020 vintage, as the latter vintage ended up quite concentrated in style chez Gouges, due to the hydric stress of 2020.

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Porrets”- Domaine Henri Gouges

Domaine Gouges' 2019 Clos des Porrets is an excellent bottle. The bouquet is deep, precise and classic in profile, wafting from the glass in a mix of cassis, dark berries, grilled venison, coffee bean, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with broad shoulders, fine focus and grip, good soil signature and a long, chewy and ripely tannic finish. Good juice. 2033-2085. **92.**

Domaine Alain Michelot

Elodie Michelot's 2019s are pretty ripe wines, as the torrid summer conditions translated into big, sappy extroverts in the bottle. I do not know the exact technical details on each wine, as we were running late with our tasting of the 2020s out of cask, so Madame Michelot generously just packed up all the half bottles of the 2019s that we had not yet tackled and said "take them with you and taste them over the weekend, when you have time to taste in a more relaxed manner." The common theme with all of the red wines here is that they are plenty ripe, as the solar summer of 2019 has probably brought in red wines here that range from fourteen to close to fifteen percent (for a few of the later-picked wines), and though a few of them do show a touch of heat on the palate, they are also pretty remarkably well-balanced and fresh for such broad-shouldered wines, with good focus and structures. But, despite their ripeness levels, the wines also have good signatures of soil underneath the lovely and generous fruit tones, and some are indeed very fresh and fairly classical in their expressions of their respective terroirs, albeit, at higher octane and sappier fruit levels than usual. Elodie Michelot did not rush to bottle this vintage, as the 2019s were all bottled in July of 2021, so they had a good, long and relaxed élevage. A few of the wines here stray over the line for my plate into the realm of "sur maturité", often showing a bit of balsamic tones to go along with all that fruit, but they are the exceptions, rather than the rule in this lineup of 2019s. It is not my absolute favorite vintage stylistically here in the last half dozen years, but a great many of the wines have really turned out remarkably well and could well be very pleasant cellar surprises if given a decade of hibernation in a cool corner of the cellar.

2019 Nuits St. Georges "la Perrière Noblot" Blanc- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 Nuits St. Georges Blanc from Elodie Michelot is already beautifully expressive on the nose, offering up a deep and complex bouquet of pear, apple, macadamia nut, chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms, a touch of sweet butter and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and wide open, with a succulent core of fruit, good framing acids and a long, complex finish. This is a ripe and nicely balanced wine that is likely to be at its best in its relative youth, as it does not have a whole lot of acidity in reserve to carry it down the road. That said, it is brighter and fresher, not to mention more classical in its profile, than many 2003 white Burgundies, many of which aged far longer and more gracefully than I ever would have anticipated. So, this wine may well end up cruising along for many more years than I expect. 2022-2027+? **90.**

2019 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 Morey *villages* bottling from Domaine Michelot is plenty ripe, but also fresh and fairly well-balanced at the same time. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of sappy black raspberries and black cherries, bonfire, venison, dark soil tones and mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy and quite ripe, with a full-bodied format, fine depth at the core, a bit of backend heat and a long, complex and fairly chewy finish. I like this wine even better in vintages that are not so "solar" in profile, but this really holds together very well at what must be a pretty high octane. 2027-2053. **88.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges "Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Alain Michelot

I would assume that the Nuits V.V. was one of the later-picked wines in 2019, but it was showing very well at the time of my visit to the domaine and displays no signs of overripeness on either the nose or palate. The bouquet is a sappy blend of red and black cherries, nutskin, roasted *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the

wine is deep, pure and full, with a suave attack, a sappy core, fine focus and grip and a long, seamlessly tannic finish. This wine has the broad shoulders of the vintage *chez* Michelot, but also excellent balance and purity. Good juice. 2027-2050+. **90.**

2019 Morey St. Denis “les Charrières”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 les Charrières from Madame Michelot is another of the top successes in her lineup of premier crus in this vintage. The wine is nicely reserved in personality at the present time, offering up a complex nose of dark berries, black cherries, bonfire, gamebird, a complex base of dark soil tones and a discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and youthful, with a fine core of black fruit, very good soil undertow, ripe, firm tannins and a long, well-balanced and chewy finish. 2029-2065+. **92.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “aux Champs Perdrix”- Domaine Alain Michelot

This is the *villages* bottling of Champs Perdrix, rather than the premier cru reported on a bit below. Like several vineyards in Burgundy, part of Champs Perdrix was awarded premier cru status when the Appellation Contrôlée system was adopted, and about a third was designated as *villages*. As Elodie Michelot noted, there is no real logical reason for the split where it occurs, as there is no pathway that cuts across the vineyard, no real change in exposition or soil composition, so the family hopes one day that the entire vineyard will be allowed premier cru status. In the meantime, the 2019 Champs Perdrix AC offers up a very ripe and black fruity nose of black raspberries, black cherries, chocolate, gentle balsamic overtones, a touch of lavender, hung game and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with tangy acids, firm tannins and very good length and grip on the complex and impressively well-balanced finish. There is a touch of backend heat here, but the wine really does a fine job of walking this tightrope of ripeness and retaining bounce and freshness on the finish and is actually quite good in its style. 2030-2060. **89+.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “la Richemone”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 la Richemone from Domaine Michelot is one of the riper wines in the lineup this year, offering up a deep, sappy and complex nose of black cherries, black raspberries, chocolate, dark soil tones, roasted meats, smoke and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, broad-shouldered and rock solid at the core, with fairly high octane, good focus and grip, ripe, firm tannins and a long, tangy and gently warm finish. This is really quite nicely balanced for its octane, but I have to guess that this is in the 14.5 percent range, give or take a couple of tenths either way. It works at this size and shape quite well, but it will not be for every palate. 2030-2075. **90+.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “aux Champs Perdrix” 1er Cru- Domaine Alain Michelot

The premier cru bottling of Champs Perdrix from Elodie Michelot is another big boy in the 2019 vintage, but again, it is really pretty well-balanced, despite its higher alcohol and ripeness levels. I really like the complexity on the nose, which offers up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, coffee grounds, bonfire, roasted venison and chocolate. However, as it sits in the glass, more signs of overt *sur maturité* start to emerge. On the palate is deep, full-bodied and powerful, with a great core of fruit, firm, chewy tannins, good acids and some backend heat warming up the long finish. This is closed right now and not particularly charming, putting on more of a sullen teenage front than the *villages* bottling of Champs Perdrix. How it will emerge from its adolescent phase remains to be seen. This wine seems like it could go either way- either evolve into an overtly overripe character, or rally and stay fresh and develop nicely with bottle age. I am really not sure. 2030-2075. **87-91?**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 les Cailles *chez* Michelot seems to be one of the less powerful wines in the lineup this year, and for this reason, all of the underlying complexity of this great *terroir* are allowed to shine in this ripe, but emphatically, not overripe wine. The bouquet is deep, suave and classy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, bitter chocolate, *gamebird*, woodsmoke, a nice touch of violets, stony soil tones and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and balance, ripe, buried tannins and a long, impressive finish. This has turned out very well indeed in 2019. 2033-2080. **93.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 Chaignots from Elodie Michelot is one of the riper wines aromatically in her lineup of 2019s, with some notes of *sur maturité* poking out on the quite complex nose of sweet dark berries, chocolate, balsamic notes, coffee grounds, venison, a touch of cedar, mustard seed and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is a bit fresher than the nose suggests, with a broad-shouldered and chewy personality, good length and grip and an absolutely buxom core of very ripe fruit. This may well get more interesting with bottle age, and as it is pretty tannic out of the blocks, I would bury it away and see what time will do with it. There is a bit of grittiness to the texture of the tannins here which will insist on some bottle age before the wine starts to drink with generosity. I really do not have a good sense of how this wine will age, but there is no denying that there are some good elements here, to go along with some pretty heady ripeness. 2030-2060? **87-91?**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 Vaucrains from Elodie Michelot is another of my favorites in the cellar this year, as again, this is not quite as ripe in personality as some of the other Nuits premier crus in the cellar. The nose is ripe, but fresh and classic in its combination of sappy black cherries, dark berries, venison, stony soil tones, bonfire, a nice touch of vanillin oak and a topnote of dark chocolate. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and focused, with great depth at the core, coupled to lovely soil signature, ripe, firm and chewy tannins, good balance and a long, complex and well-balanced finish. Again, this seems a touch cooler on the palate than a few of the wines of 2019 here. 2035-2080. **93.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Alain Michelot

The 2019 Les St. Georges is another pretty powerful wine this year, with again, some of those balsamic overripe notes hovering in the background of its quite complex aromatic constellation of black cherries, sappy dark berries, espresso, a touch of *garrigue*, balsam bough, a complex base of dark soil tones, *pigeon*, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, tangy and quite cool in the mouth, with a rock solid core of fruit, chewy tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, impressively soil-driven finish. I like the odds of this wine blossoming into a very good bottle even a bit more than equally ripe premier crus such as the Chaignots or Champs Perdrix this year. But, that said, it does not seem to have quite the same freshness as the les Vaucrains and les Cailles in 2019 and will probably not quite reach the same heights. However, it has turned out quite well in its riper guise. 2033-2080. **91.**

2019 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Alain Michelot

I love Elodie Michelot’s Clos Vougeot, which hails from old vines right up at the top of the Clos, near Grands Echézeaux. The 2019 version here is another big, ripe and structured wine that seems likely to age very long, but how it will turn out in the end is going to be interesting. Keep in mind that none of these 2019s are as overtly overripe in personality as the 2003 reds were out of the blocks, and those wines have aged surprisingly well and are really rather

shockingly good at age eighteen, so these 2019s may well blossom with extended aging. But, for now this is a big, very ripe wine, delivering scents of sappy black cherries, black raspberries, grilled venison, dark soil tones, coffee grounds, woodsmoke and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and chewy, with superb depth at the core, firm tannins, a good spine of acidity and a long, primary and powerful finish. This is fresher on the backend today than several of the premier crus here and seems likely to come out the other end of its aging tunnel as a very impressive wine, but it will always be a bit outsized stylistically. 2033-2085. **92.**



Pernand-Vergelesses

Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

I really like the recent vintages I have been able to taste from Domaine Rapet and this is one of the domaines that I hope to visit on my next trip to the region, as I would love to have a fuller sense of the changes that have been wrought here since Vincent Rapet and his wife Sylvette, took over the reins of the estate.

Vins Blancs

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Combottes”- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

The Rapet family’s vines in les Combottes are just starting to come into their prime age, as the youngest here are closing in now on twenty-five years of age. The 2019 version is a lovely *villages* bottling, offering up a pure and complex bouquet of tangerine, apple, citrus blossoms,

chalky soil tones and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and focused, with a lovely core of ripe fruit, good soil signature, quite good framing acids and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. The 2019 les Combottes comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol in this vintage and is wide open in personality out of the blocks, but has the balance to also keep nicely for a decade. Good juice. 2022-2032. **89.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “en Caradeux” Premier Cru- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

Vincent Rapet’s 2019 bottling of en Caradeux is another very fine example of the vintage, with more depth and inherent complexity from its premier cru *terroir* than is found in the very lovely les Combottes. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of ripe pear and apple, limestone minerality, almond, a lovely array of fruit blossoms and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a succulent core of fruit, excellent soil signature and grip, sound acids and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Like the 2019 Sous Frétille *chez* Rapet, this wine is a bit broader in the shoulders and does not have quite the same backend cut in this vintage as in most years, but it is drinking beautifully right from release and is loaded with pleasure. 2022-2035. **91+.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “Sous Frétille” Premier Cru- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

As I have mentioned in past articles on Burgundy, one of the greatest values to be found in the overheated world of white Burgundy today are the top bottlings from this beautiful premier cru of Sous Frétille. At least if one likes the style of Corton-Charlemagne (albeit not quite as deep or powerful) and does not mind paying less than half the price! Vincent Rapet’s 2019 version is a superb example of the vintage, offering up a complex aromatic constellation of pear, apple, fresh almond, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, just a hint of *crème patissière*, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and full, with a lovely core, fine soil undertow, sound framing acids and good length and grip on the complex finish. This comes in listed at 13.5 percent octane and only really shows its ripeness a touch on the backend, which does not have the customary lift and cut of more classically inclined vintages. But, this is a lovely wine. 2022-2035. **91+.**

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Rapet has plenty of old vine fruit in its blend, as most of these vines are fifty years of age, but there is a parcel included that was replanted a decade or so ago. The combination of old and young vines seems to have really worked well in the solar vintage of 2019, as the wine has turned out beautifully. It comes in at 13.5 percent octane and offers up a superb bouquet of golden delicious apple, pear, fresh almond, a nice touch of pastry cream, a superb base of limestone, just a hint of iodine and a lovely foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with excellent depth in the mid-palate, fine minerality, good, but not great acids and lovely balance on the very long, complex and already quite delicious finish. The more forward aspect of the 2019 vintage has produced a Corton-Charlemagne from Vincent Rapet that will age very nicely, but unlike most vintages, will drink with breed and generosity from its release. Fine, fine juice. 2022-2045. **93.**

Vins Rouges

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Belles Filles”- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

Vincent Rapet raises his les Belles Filles bottling of Pernand in twenty percent new oak. The vineyard is situated just to the northwest of the village proper, with a cooler exposition that kept the wine at 13.5 percent octane in the sunny vintage of 2019. The wine is nicely red fruity

and transparent in personality, offering up scents of cherries, red currants, lovely soil elements, gamebird, woodsmoke, a bit of sweet stem tones and a deft touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a fine core of fruit, moderate tannins and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This has good structure and will demand a bit of cellaring to blossom, but it will be a fine bottle of Pernand *villages* in due time. 2027-2055. **89.**

2019 Beaune “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

The Clos du Roi is one of four premier crus the Rapet family has in the village of Beaune, as they also have vines in Bressandes, les Cents Vignes and Grèves. The family’s parcel Clos du Roi was replanted after the winter freeze of 1985 and the vines are now more than thirty years of age and well into their prime. The wine is raised in twenty percent new wood and comes in at a svelte (for 2019) 13.5 percent octane. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of red plums, cherries, *pigeon*, a touch of spice, gentle notes of whole clusters, a fine base of soil and a gentle framing of new wood. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and youthful, with a fine core of fruit, lovely soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This is already nicely soil-driven in personality, but it is still a young wine and will reward patience. 2029-2065. **90+.**

2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

The 2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune “Vieilles Vignes” from Domaine Rapet is a very pretty example of the vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering up lovely purity and transparency in its aromatic and flavor profile. The nose delivers a mix of cherries, pomegranate, bonfire, a nice touch of sweet, spicy whole cluster tones, a fine base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and very well balanced, with a good core of red fruit, lovely soil signature, modest tannins and fine length and grip on the complex finish. This is very good Chorey! 2026-2050. **89.**

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Fournaux”- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

The Rapet family has vines in both the *villages* and premier cru sections of Fournaux and bottle the two separately. The 2019 *villages* version of Fournaux is very pretty and red fruity in this vintage, delivering a promising young constellation of cherries, red currants, bonfire, venison, sweet stem tones, and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and quite elegant for young Savigny, with a good core, tangy acids, moderate tannins and excellent backend lift and grip on the long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is a really good *villages* and will be a superb value. It probably needs six or seven years in the cellar to fully blossom. 2028-2060+. **90+.**

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Fournaux” 1er Cru- Domaine Rapet Père et Fils

This version of Vincent Rapet’s aux Fournaux bottling is all from the premier cru section of the vineyard. This is the only premier cru the family owns in the village of Savigny, with their Fournaux parcel planted to vines more than fifty years of age. These old vines see just a touch more new wood here, with thirty percent of the casks new and the wine again comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol in this vintage. The wine is a lovely young Savigny, offering up scents of red currants, cherries, a touch of orange peel, gamebird, iron-infused soil tones, a touch of coriander seed, bonfire and cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows some nice, old vine creaminess in the core, with good acids and focus, lovely mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is excellent juice. 2029-2070. **92.**



Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

Simon Rollin was one of those producers who had a bit more octane in their white wines of 2019 than in 2020, but conversely, his 2019 red wines are actually a bit lower in alcohol than his corresponding 2020 red. He started picking on September 12th for his chardonnay parcels in 2019 and the pinot noir on September 14th in this year. The 2019 whites chez Rollin will drink beautifully from early on in their evolutions and even the superb Corton-Charlemagne, which usually demands at least eight to ten years of bottle age here before it starts to drink with generosity, should not require too many years of bottle age before it starts to hit on all cylinders. It was my distinct impression that Monsieur Rollin had a slight preference for his very strong 2019 red wines over his 2020s, as they are a touch lower in octane and really show lovely complexity and potential. The wines are typically red fruity in the style of Pernand (a trait that was subsumed by the black fruity vintage character of 2020), with good soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and lovely potential. They will generally demand close to a decade of bottle age to really start to drink well, with the exception of the villages level bottling of Pernand-Vergelesses, but they will be lovely wines once they are ready to drink. The 2019 red wines had all been bottled in February and March of 2021, so they had recovered nicely from their mise and were showing well at the very end of November of last year, when I visited the domaine.

Vins Blancs

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2019 Pernand *villages* Blanc is a lovely wine from Domaine Rollin, coming in at an even fourteen percent octane and offering up lovely generosity right out of the blocks. The bouquet delivers scents of apple, lemon, pear, a touch of fresh almond, a fine base of chalky soil tones, white flowers and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a fine core of fruit, bright acids and a long, well-balanced finish. There is just a hint of fresh fig on the backend of the palate here. 2022-2035. **89.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Clous” Blanc- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The Rollin family’s 2019 les Clous bottling was showing well at the time of my visit, offering up a complex bouquet of pear, apple, lime blossoms, almond, a fine base of limestone soil and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and round, with fine generosity on the attack, a good core, fine soil signature, zesty acids and fine length and grip on the complex finish. This too will drink well from the start, but has the balance to also age nicely over the middle term. 2022-2040. **90+.**

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

To my palate, Domaine Rollin makes one of the very finest examples of Corton-Charlemagne in all of the Côte de Beaune and their 2019 is going to be another excellent wine. This is a touch more reserved out of the blocks than the les Clous bottling, but in the context of this particular wine, it too is quite a forward vintage for this beautiful wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, lemon, a superb base of chalky minerality, white lilies, citrus zest and a refined foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with excellent depth at the core, beautiful mineral drive and grip, zesty framing acids and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and very refined finish. 2024-2050. **94.**

Vins Rouges

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2019 Pernand-Vergelesses *rouge* is a very fine *villages* in the making. The bouquet shows lovely red fruit tones of strawberries and cherries to augment scents of venison, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil, rose petals and just a touch of white pepper in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely transparent in personality, with a fine core of fruit, good acids and grip, moderate tannins and a long well-balanced and classy finish. Good juice. 2027-2050. **89+.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2019 bottling of les Vergelesses is a fine, fine example of the vintage. The classically red fruity nose jumps from the glass in a mix of cherries, blood orange, gamebird, stony minerality, beautiful spice tones of clove and nutmeg, cedary oak and again, just a hint of youthful pepperiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and nicely transparent in personality, with a good core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2029-2060+. **92.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Fichots”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

Monsieur Rollin’s 2019 les Fichots is another excellent wine in the making. The nose delivers a fine blend of cherries, blood orange, peonies, roses, *pigeon*, a superb base of soil tones, gentle spices and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with excellent depth in the core, good soil undertow, silky tannins and a long, poised and classy finish. Another lovely bottle. 2029-2060+. **92+.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “Île de Vergelesses”- Domaine Rollin Père et Fils

The 2019 Île de Vergelesses from Domaine Rollin is truly a beautiful bottle of wine. The first class nose wafts from the glass in a combination of cherries, red plum, lovely spice elements, spit-roasted gamebird, a fine range of floral tones in the upper register and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully suave on the attack, with a fine core of red fruit, lovely mineral undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and focused finish. This will need a good dozen years to start to really drink with generosity, but it is going to be excellent once it is ready to drink. 2031-2075. **93+**.

Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

Chisa Bize kindly opened up three of her 2019s after we had worked through her full range of the 2020s. The 2019 vintage was a very short crop here at Domaine Bize, but the wines are very high in quality and will make fans of this excellent Savigny estate very happy, if they can secure an allocation. The two 2019 red wines that we tasted were quite low in octane for the vintage, with the Savigny AC coming in at 12.6 percent alcohol and the excellent premier cru of les Vergelesses only a touch higher at 12.9 percent. In my report on the 2020 vintage, I had noted that the 2020 reds were generally a touch lower in octane than their corresponding cuvée from 2019, but I was incorrect in that statement, at least as regards the Savigny villages and les Vergelesses bottlings which I tried from the former vintage. The 2019 Savigny Blanc was a bit riper in personality, as this wine tips the scales at 13.8 percent, but it is bright, zesty and shows no signs of excess ripeness on either the nose or palate. The 2019s here are generally more forward in style than is customary for most vintages chez Bize and they will start to drink with lovely generosity quite early on in their evolutions. Clearly, 2019 is a very strong vintage for Domaine Bize.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc from Domaine Simon Bize et Fils is very classical in its aromatic and flavor profiles and I would have suspected that this wine hovered around thirteen percent octane, if I had been made to guess! The wine is bright and focused on the nose, offering up scents of sweet quince, green apple, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, just a hint of *crème patissière* and a lovely topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and full-bodied, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, zesty acids and fine focus and bounce on the long and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2022-2040. **91**.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Bourgeots”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The les Bourgeots is the *villages* level bottling from Domaine Bize, though I am not sure if this moniker still appears on the labels these days, as the youngest vintage of this wine I have in my own cellar is the stellar 1999. So, this may just be listed as Savigny-lès-Beaune these days on the labels. In any case, the wine is lovely in 2019, offering up a bright and already blossoming bouquet of dark berries, plums, a refined base of dark soil tones, exotic touches of both eucalyptus and fresh mint, a nice touch of sweet stem tones and the first signs of forest floor. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and intensely flavored, with a good core, lovely transparency and balance, moderate tannins and lovely grip on the long and complex finish. My bottles of the 1999 are still a tad on the young side for my palate, but the lovely 2019 is not likely to require anywhere near as much bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2026-2055. **90+**.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2019 vintage of Domaine Bize’s les Vergelesses bottling is an absolute classic in the making. The refined aromatic constellation offers up a youthful mix of black plums, sweet dark berries, bonfire, *pigeon*, a beautifully complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a youthful touch of stems and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very poised, with excellent depth at the core, impressive complexity and grip, refined balance and a long, ripely tannic and utterly seamless finish. Fine, fine juice. 2029-2075. **93.**

Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Not surprisingly, Guillaume Camus’ 2019s are excellent, or at least the four that I tasted during my December trip to the region. Guillaume started picking in his warmest parcel of vines in the premier cru of Clos du Roi in Beaune on September 12th of 2019, and finished up with his Bourgogne rouge plots a week later. He notes that the entire range came in between thirteen and 13.8 percent in octane in 2019, with the highest alcohol wine being the last-picked Bourgogne in this vintage. So the ripeness levels in 2019 and 2020 are pretty much comparable chez Camus. The 2019 wines are very classical in style and do not seem to hail from a solar summer vintage, which was no easy task in this year, with the two blazing heat spikes in July and August and the brutal drought between the two.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Cuvée Reine Joly”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2019 Cuvée Reine Joly is a beautiful bottle of Savigny, offering up a bright and classic nose of red currants, cherries, a touch of orange peel, gamebird, a lovely array of Savigny spice elements, a fine base of soil and just a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and quite soil-driven in personality, with a good core of red fruit, ripe, buried tannins, good acids and a long, focused and very well balanced finish. A fine *villages*! 2027-2065. **90+.**

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

I love Guillaume Camus’ les Lavières bottling each and every year and the 2019 will be yet another excellent example of this beautiful *terroir*. The bouquet delivers a refined constellation of red plums, red and black cherries, *pigeon*, a bit of raw cocoa, a refined base of soil, woodsmoke, a touch of spicy oak and a pungent floral topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is bright, full and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with bright acids, fine-grained tannins and beautiful backend transparency defining the long and seamlessly balanced finish. This will be a supremely elegant rendition of les Lavières once it is fully ready to drink. 2030-2080. **93.**

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Gravains”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2019 Gravains from Domaine Camus-Bruchon is also an excellent young wine, with superb detail in evidence on the nose, which delivers scents of red plums, pomegranate, cherries, a hint of chocolate, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, peonies and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in personality out of the blocks, with a fine core of red fruit, excellent mineral undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and very precise finish. Fine, fine juice. 2031-2080+. **93+.**

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Narbantons”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Guillaume Camus’ 2019 Narbantons is another outstanding example of this vintage. The bouquet is deep, youthful and nicely vibrant, wafting from the glass in a blend of red and black cherries, red currants, smoked duck, lovely spice tones, stony minerality, bonfire, a touch of mustard seed and a gentle foundation of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied,

focused and soil-driven, with tangy acids, lovely mineral drive, a fine core of fruit and a long, ripely tannic and very well balanced finish. Like all of the other 2019s I tasted from the domaine, there is a freshness to the fruit component here that is fairly rare in this vintage. A lovely vintage for the Camus family's Narbantons. 2030-2080. **93.**

Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The de Nicolay family again decided to only harvest grapes during the morning hours in 2019, as it was once again warm enough in the afternoons that it made sense to only collect fruit in the cooler hours of the day. Claude de Nicolay recalled that "the days that we picked les Lavières were still very warm in the mornings, as that weekend there was a hot wind blowing up from the south that originated in the Sahara." Alcohol levels for the red wines at Chandon de Briailles are higher in 2019 than was the case in the following vintage, with wines generally ranging from 13.5 percent octane up to 14.2 percent for the les Lavières- picked during those hot weekend mornings with the Sirocco blowing. The domaine finished bringing in grapes on September 17th in 2019 and Claude is quite content with how the wines have turned out. She used plenty of whole clusters for the reds in this vintage, with the les Lavières made entirely from whole clusters. We only tasted one of the 2019 whites here during my visit- the beautiful Île de Vergelesses Blanc, which Claude and François decided to ferment and raise entirely in a thousand liter Stockinger foudre in this vintage. The wine spent fully two years aging in the foudre prior to bottling and has turned out beautifully, so I have a feeling we may see more white wines raised here in Stockinger foudres in the near future!.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune "les Lavières"- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2019 les Lavières is a lovely wine in the making. It offers up a nicely ripe, but not overripe nose of baked red and black cherries, a bit of youthful Savigny fruitcake tones, grilled venison, bonfire, a fine base of volcanic soil tones and plenty of upper register spiciness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and meaty in personality, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, suavely tannic and complex finish. This does not have the same fine backend lift that one finds in the 2020 version, but it does not have the same level of acidity. The wine will want at least a handful of years in the cellar to blossom, but it should drink very nicely from a fairly early point in its evolution. Good juice. 2026-2050+. **91.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses "Île de Vergelesses" - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

About a third of the domaine's fine holdings in Île de Vergelesses are very old vines, and these were picked ahead of the Sirocco weekend, with the younger vines being gathered at the same time as the les Lavières a few days later, when that hot south wind was blowing. The wine has turned out beautifully, with the old vine portion of the blend adding a sense of vibrancy that really augurs well for its long-term evolution. The nose wafts from the glass in a youthful mix of cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, coffee, a complex base of soil tones, just a touch of new oak and a beautiful topnote of sweet stem tones from the whole clusters. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured out of the blocks, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and lovely balance and grip on the long and complex finish. This is an excellent wine in the making! 2029-2065+. **93.**

2019 Corton "Bressandes"- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The domaine's fine parcel in Bressandes was picked ahead of the Sirocco as well, so the wine comes in at a quite civilized (for the vintage) 13.8 percent octane in 2019. The bouquet is deep and promising, but also more reserved at the present time than the Île de Vergelesses, as it

delivers scents of red and black cherries, red currants, smoked gamebird, coffee, whole cluster spice tones and a deft foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and balance, impressive backend soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and a long, classic finish. All this excellent wine needs is time to blossom. 2033-2080+. **94+**.

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “Île de Vergelesses” Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The domaine’s 2019 Île de Vergelesses Blanc has turned out splendidly, though Claude noted that “it having been raised solely in the Stockinger *foudre* seemed to make it a bit reserved early on, but it has started to blossom very nicely and I really like how it is starting to taste now.” The wine offers up an excellent, youthful nose of apple, a touch of tangerine, sweet quince, a lovely base of chalky minerality, fresh almond and just a whisper of oak influence. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and youthfully complex, with a fine core, lovely mineral drive and a long, crisp and beautifully balanced finish. 2023-2045. **92**.



Beaune

Domaine de Bellene et Maison Roches de Bellene

Nicolas Potel has done exceptionally well in the 2019 vintage. He started picking on the 17th of September in this year and generally brought in pretty ripe white wines, with alcohols tending to range from 13.5 to fourteen percent for his chardonnay bottlings. His red wines are a touch lower in octane than the whites, listed between thirteen and 13.5 percent and showing

beautifully for the vintage, with quite classic, precise aromatics and flavors, excellent mid-palate depth, good, ripe underlying tannins and fine potential for the cellar. I have not tasted as many of Nicolas Potel's wines as I should have over the last half dozen years, but based on what I have been fortunate enough to taste, his 2019 reds may well be among the finest wines he has yet crafted from his relatively new Domaine de Bellene and small scale négociant, Maison Roche de Bellene. The 2019 whites here that I tasted are quite tasty and also quite typical of the vintage-plush, pleasingly ripe and wide open in personality and generally built to drink on the younger side. The red wines here from both the estate vineyards and the négociant bottlings are built to age long and gracefully, with impressive purity and typicité for the vintage. Across the board, these are exceptional reds and amongst the finest collections I have tasted from the 2019 vintage.

Vins Blancs

2019 Santenay "les Charmes Dessus" Premier Cru- Domaine de Bellene

The 2019 Santenay "les Charmes Dessus" from Nicolas Potel's fine Domaine de Bellene is produced from relatively young vines, as this parcel was only planted in 2004. It is well situated, lying just down slope from the Clos Rousseau (see note for Domaine Bachey-Legros' Clos Rousseau below), with the wine raised in six hundred liter *demi-muids*, of which ten percent are new. The wine offers up a ripe and generous nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of peach, a touch of pineapple, chalky soil tones, honeysuckle and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent, with a nice, plump core, good acids and backend bounce and a long, complex finish. This tips the scales at fourteen percent this year and is a relatively fruit-driven example of the vintage, but not without a nice foundation of soil. Good juice. 2022-2035. **89**.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine de Bellene

I always like the Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc bottling from Nicolas Potel's Domaine de Bellene, as these are forty year-old vines and always give the wine a fine core. The 2019 version was raised in ten percent new wood and comes in at an even fourteen percent octane this year. It offers up a deep and nicely ripe bouquet of apple, tangerine, a touch of sweet quince, chalky minerality, hazelnut and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid in the mid-palate, with good mineral drive and grip, bright acids and just a whisper of backend heat poking out on the long and complex finish. This is pretty broad-shouldered for Savigny Blanc, but with impressive depth and complexity at the same time. Good juice. 2022-2032. **89+**.

2019 Meursault "les Forges"- Domaine de Bellene

The vines for Nicolas Potel's Meursault "les Forges" bottling were planted in 1966, so these are in their prime. The wine was raised in fifty percent new oak in 2019 and comes in at an even fourteen percent octane. The bouquet is excellent, with the old vines giving lovely precision in the combination of pear, apple, a touch of orange zest, almond, a hint of geranium, chalky minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven, with a rock solid core of fruit, good acids and grip and a long, ripe and complex finish of very nice balance. This is certainly easy to drink already, but it could do with a few years in the cellar to allow its secondary layers of complexity to emerge. 2024-2050. **90+**.

2019 Beaune "les Perrières" Blanc Premier Cru- Domaine de Bellene

The premier cru of les Perrières in Beaune is on the northern side of the *vignobles* in the commune, not far from Savigny and high up on the slope. Monsieur Potel's chardonnay vines here are not as old as many of his other parcels, as these wines were only planted in 2013. The

wine was picked on September 20th in this vintage, coming in at fourteen percent octane and was aged in fifty percent new oak. It offers up a superb bouquet, delivering scents of peach, a touch of tangerine, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, musky floral tones and a nice foundation of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core, excellent mineral undertow and grip, bright acids and a long, well-balanced and classy finish. No doubt the low yields of 2019 really harnessed the vigor of these younger vines, as this has the depth and complexity one might expect from forty or fifty year-old vines! Fine juice. 2022-2035. **91+**.

2019 Meursault “Charmes”- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Meursault “Charmes” from Maison Roche de Bellene is beautifully expressive aromatically right out of the blocks. The bouquet delivers a superb blend of passion fruit, tangerine, apple, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and buxom, with a lovely core of fruit, fine mineral undertow, good, solid acids and a long, ripe finish that seems just a tad higher in octane than its stated 13.5 percent this year. This is a very good, quite typically ripe 2019 white Burgundy, that I would be inclined to drink over the next six to eight years, as it shows very good balance right now, but may not be built for the long haul. 2022-2030. **91+**.

2019 Puligny-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Roche de Bellene

There is not the same information on the label about vine age and soil composition on the Puligny V.V. as there is on the Chassagne version this year, which is too bad, as it is always nice to know these things. In any case, the wine comes in listed at a svelte thirteen percent and offers up a refined nose of nectarine, pear, a lovely base of chalky minerality, fresh almond, honeysuckle and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, young and full, with a lovely core, good soil signature, bright acids and fine length and grip on the still fairly primary finish. This will want a few years’ worth of bottle age before drinking, just to let its secondary layers emerge. 2024-2040. **90+**.

2019 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gain”- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Champ Gain from Nicolas Potel is a good solid example of the vintage, with ripe fruit, fine soil undertow and a sound structural chassis for drinking over at least the next decade. The stylish nose wafts from the glass in a mix of peach, apple, orange blossoms, chalky soil tones, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and wide open in personality, with a good core, fine soil signature, sound framing acids and good length and grip on the complex finish. This is listed at 13.5 percent and shows a bit of the plushness of the vintage, but also has good balance and backend bounce. A tasty example. 2022-2032. **91**.

2019 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Roche de Bellene

Nicolas Potel’s 2019 Chassagne “Vieilles Vignes” was raised in ten percent new oak this year, and comes in a full point lower in octane than several of the domaine bottlings, as it is listed at an even thirteen percent. The wine is quite good, offering up an aromatic constellation of apple, pear, fruit blossoms, a bit of orange peel, a good base of soil and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and fairly youthful in profile, with a fine core, good soil undertow, zesty acids and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. The wine is made from fifty-five year-old vines, and I would guess that they is a fair bit of clay in the soils of this parcel, as the wine has good structure. This is one of Monsieur Potel’s 2019 whites that I would give a bit of bottle age to before pulling the cork. 2024-2040. **90+**.

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne from Maison Roche de Bellene is a lovely example of the vintage and one of my favorite white wine bottlings from Nicolas Potel this year. The wine

comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol and delivers a refined, complex bouquet of apple, pear, acacia blossoms, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, a very complex base of limestone minerality and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with an excellent core and soil drive, sound framing acids, lovely focus and balance and a long, complex finish. This is still a touch primary in personality, but that acids are structured so that the wine is quite accessible already, and the only good reason to hold off gratification is that more complexity will emerge with a few years' worth of bottle age. Like many top 2019 whites, this wine does not have the same backend lift one can find in the 2020s, but this is just the nature of the vintage. This is fine, fine juice. 2022-2050. **93+**.

2019 Bâtard-Montrachet- Maison Roche de Bellene

Nicolas Potel's 2019 Bâtard-Montrachet is another excellent wine. The bouquet is deep, complex and focused, wafting from the glass in a blend of white peach, apple, a touch of almond, a fine base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and just a hint of orange blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and very well-balanced, with an excellent core of pure fruit, very good acids for the vintage, fine focus and backend grip and a long, complex and classy finish. This is an excellent bottle of 2019 Bâtard-Montrachet. 2022-2050. **93+**.

Vins Rouges

2019 Volnay "Vieilles Vignes"- Maison Roche de Bellene

The old vine bottling of Volnay from Maison Roche de Bellene is made from vines that range from forty to sixty years of age. The wine is raised in a combination of cask and *demi-muids*, with twenty percent of the oak new in 2019; the wine comes in at a svelte thirteen percent octane in this vintage. Aromatically, the wine is already beautifully expressive, offering up scents of cherries, red plums, a touch of pomegranate, woodsmoke, gamebird, a fine base of soil, violets and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely tangy for the vintage, with a good core and soil signature, moderate tannins and fine focus and grip on the youthfully complex finish. This is quite pretty, but it needs four or five years minimum in the cellar before it starts to relax and blossom. 2026-2055+. **90+**.

2019 Beaune "Grèves"- Domaine de Bellene

Nicolas Potel owns extremely old vines in the beautiful premier cru of Grèves, as these vines were planted all the way back in 1904! The wine is absolutely stunning in 2019, coming in at 13.5 percent and having been raised in fifty percent new casks in this vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and precise, wafting from the glass in a mix of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, peonies, woodsmoke, gentle spice tones and a lovely framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and has beautiful old vine depth at the core, with excellent soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and great balance and grip on the long, youthful and complex finish. This will need a full decade to blossom, as it still has a bit of oak tannin to absorb, but it is going to be a very long-lived and stunning bottle of Grèves during the coming half century or more! 2029-2080. **93**.

2019 Vosne-Romanée "Vieilles Vignes"- Maison Roche de Bellene

Nicolas Potel's 2019 Vosne-Romanée "Vieilles Vignes" is an excellent example of the vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent alcohol and offering impressive purity and elegance on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, bonfire, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, espresso and a deft foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and full-bodied, with a lovely core of black fruit, fine soil

signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, bright and nascently complex finish. This is going to be an excellent bottle once it starts to drink with generosity. 2027-2060. **91.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée “les Quartiers de Nuits”- Domaine de Bellene

The vines in les Quartiers de Nuits are owned by Monsieur Potel, hence why they are bottled under his Domaine de Bellene label. These vines were planted all the way back in 1927 and the wine was raised in fifty percent new oak in the 2019 vintage. The bouquet is deep and complex, offering up an old vine intensity in its display of black cherries, dark berries, coffee bean, grilled venison, a superb base of dark soil tones, a touch of nutskin, woodsmoke and a beautifully done framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and deep at the core, with great balance and grip, excellent complexity and a long, fine-grained and vibrant finish. This is premier cru quality without a doubt and really shares a lot of aromatic and flavor similarities with a good bottle of Echézeaux! This is one of the finest Vosne ACs I have tasted in quite a long time, but the wine is more structured than the Vieilles Vignes bottling from Maison Roche de Bellene and will demand a bit longer in the cellar before it starts to stir. 2030-2065. **92+.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes” from Nicolas Potel is made from vines that range from forty-five to fifty-five years of age and was raised in twenty percent new oak. As is the case with several other of these fine *villages* bottlings, the *elevage* was done in a combination of barrels and *demi-muids*. The wine offers up a fine, youthful nose of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, nutskin, gamebird, dark soil tones and a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a lovely core, impressive soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, svelte and promising finish. All this fine AC needs is some bottle age to soften up properly on the backend. 2028-2060+. **90.**

2019 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Bellene

Nicolas Potel’s estate-owned *villages* level parcels that go into his domaine bottling of Nuits Vieilles Vignes are fully seventy years of age. The wine is fermented with indigenous yeasts and raised in twenty-five percent new oak, prior to bottling without a fining and a very light filtration. This bottling tips the scales at 13.5 percent octane and offers up an excellent bouquet of cherries, pomegranate, a touch of wild strawberry, woodsmoke, gamebird, raw cocoa, a lovely base of soil and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is focused, complex and full-bodied, with excellent depth in the mid-palate, superb soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and refined balance on the long and nascently complex finish. This is an excellent bottle of Nuits St. Georges! 2030-2075. **91.**

2019 Vosne-Romanée “les Suchots”- Domaine de Bellene

Monsieur Potel’s parcel of vines in les Suchots are even older than those in his Nuits St. Georges plots, as these vines were planted all the way back in 1937! He raised his Suchots in fifty percent new oak in 2019 and bottled it with a light filtration and no fining. The wine is just a touch riper than the superb old vine Nuits, coming in at fourteen percent and delivering a lovely, new oaky nose of red and black raspberries, smoked duck, a beautiful base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, black tea, Vosne spices and a generous foundation of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, complex, full-bodied and plush at the core, with excellent mineral drive and grip, ripe, firm tannins, lovely focus and a long, ripely tannic and very promising finish. This is an excellent bottle of Suchot in the making, but it will need some extended cellaring to soften up, as it has still not fully absorbed its oak tannins yet. The overall balance here seems just fine

for the long haul, but it will demand some patience. As I say about so many young wines from Vosne these days, this might have been even better with a tad less new oak. 2034-2085. **92+**.

2019 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Maison Roche de Bellene

The *négociant* bottling of 2019 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes” from Nicolas Potel is beautifully svelte for this solar vintage, coming in at an even thirteen percent and delivering a classic, perfumed Chambolle nose of cherries, red plums, rose petals, gentle notes of mustard seed, chalky soil tones, gamebird, a touch of cocoa and a delicate framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is elegant, full-bodied and bouncy, with a lovely core of sappy fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and utterly seamless finish. Fine juice that could do with a half dozen years’ worth of bottle age before drinking, just to let it really reach cruising altitude. 2028-2060. **91.**

2019 Corton “le Rognet”- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Corton “le Rognet” from Maison Roche de Bellene is not made from particularly old vines, but these have now reached “a good age” of thirty years-old. The wine was raised in thirty percent new oak in 2019 and comes in at 13.5 percent, which is pretty moderate for this warm *lieu à dit* on the hill of Corton. The nose wafts from the glass in an excellent blend of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, roasted venison, woodsmoke, just a hint of coriander seed and a svelte framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully focused, with a sappy core of fruit, fine soil undertow, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, nascently complex and well-balanced finish. 2035-2085. **93.**

2019 Clos de la Roche- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Clos de la Roche from Maison Roche de Bellene is an absolutely superb version of this outstanding *terroir*. Like almost all the 2019 reds that I tasted from Nicolas Potel, this wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane and offers up beautiful precision and purity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet delivers scents of black cherries, red plums, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke and cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with excellent mineral drive and grip, a lovely core, ripe tannins and fine balance on the long, complex and classic finish. This is lovely Clos de la Roche. 2033-2080. **94.**

2019 Charmes-Chambertin- Maison Roche de Bellene

Nicolas Potel has made truly stellar red wines in 2019 and his Charmes-Chambertin *négociant* bottling is no exception! The nose is simply beautiful, jumping from the glass in a classic blend of red and black cherries, plums, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, just a hint of mustard seed and a fine framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nascently complex, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully balanced finish. This is outstanding Charmes that recalls the best 2000 red Burgundies, but with just a bit better grip and structural harness. Fine, fine juice. 2032-2080. **94.**

2019 Chambertin- Maison Roche de Bellene

The 2019 Chambertin from Nicolas Potel is one of the finest 2019s that I have tasted. It delivers the tightly-wrapped depth and complexity that defines the finest examples of this great *terroir*, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a refined blend of red and black cherries, plums, grilled meats, dark chocolate, a superb base of soil tones, woodsmoke, refined spice tones and a lovely foundation of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with excellent focus and grip, ripe, buried tannins, impeccable balance and a long, complex and very, very promising finish. This is a classic example of

Chambertin that will need plenty of bottle age, but it is going to be a stunning bottle once it is ready to drink. 2035-2100. **95.**

Maison Joseph Drouhin

I probably made a tactical error in how I asked to taste the 2019s from Maison Joseph Drouhin on this trip, as I asked Véronique Drouhin if it might be possible to receive a range of 2019s in half bottle that I might be able to taste during my trip, back at the guesthouse I was staying at during the evenings, rather than try to cram them in following the big lineup of 2020s that we tasted as barrel samples. I had forgotten that in recent years, the maison has stopped bottling most of its premier crus in half bottle, so the generous range I ended up tasting of 2019s were principally Villages level wines. This was, of course, quite alright on my part, as the Drouhin family has been making a concerted effort for the last eight or ten vintages to really ramp up the quality of their villages level wines, so I had a very fine range of bottlings to investigate, and maybe I managed to pay them a bit more attention without the usual constellation of stunning premier and grand crus waiting in the wings. However, it does not give me all that comprehensive a view of how Maison Joseph Drouhin has fared in the 2019 vintage, as I did not get a chance to try any of their finest bottlings, so that is the downside to this range of tasting notes.



Vins Blancs de Maison Drouhin

2019 Saint-Véran- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Saint-Véran from Maison Joseph Drouhin is a pretty example of the vintage, which has been the case for as long as I have been drinking this bottling, which has been for several decades! The 2019 is nicely ripe at 13.5 percent octane and offers up pear, fresh pineapple, orange blossoms, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full and focused, with a plump core of fruit, good acids and a long, complex and gently sun-kissed finish that suggests drinking this in the next few years will be a good idea. 2022-2025+. **89.**

2019 Pouilly-Vinzelles- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhin family's 2019 Pouilly-Vinzelles is fairly ripe in this vintage, tipping the scales at fourteen percent alcohol, but it is very nicely balanced. The nose is bright and complex, jumping from the glass in a mix of fresh pineapple, a touch of passion fruit, pear, chalky minerality, lemon blossoms and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and wide open in personality, with excellent mid-palate depth, sound framing acids and a long, complex and succulent finish. This wine is delicious out of the blocks, but it is already wearing its heart on its sleeve and will not be for the long haul. 2022-2025+. **90.**

2019 Rully- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 vintage of Rully from Maison Drouhin is a very pretty wine, coming in at a svelte thirteen percent octane and offering up beautifully ripe fruit notes of apple, fresh pineapple, wet stone minerality, a touch of spring flowers, lemon peel and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and zesty, with a plump core of fruit, good soil undertow, sound framing acids and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2022-2030. **90.**

2019 Saint-Romain- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Saint-Romain from Maison Drouhin is a pretty young wine, coming in at a nicely cool octane level of thirteen percent in the warm summer of 2019. The wine delivers a bright and youthfully complex blend of lemon, apple, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, spring flowers, just a touch of citrus peel and discreet new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and balanced, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, zesty and vibrant finish. This is still a tad on the young side and would benefit from a year or two in the cellar to allow more of its latent complexity to come to the fore. 2023-2030+. **90.**

2019 Côte de Beaune Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I always think of the Côte de Beaune Blanc from Maison Drouhin as their baby Clos des Mouches Blanc. The 2019 vintage is very nice, but cut in the riper style of many of these 2019s, as it comes in at a full fourteen percent alcohol. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, a touch of tangerine, lemon chiffon, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, white lilies, a hint of beeswax and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, generous and wide open in personality, with a plump core of fruit, moderate acids and lovely length and grip on the poised and succulent finish. This will be a relatively short-lived and broad-shouldered vintage for this bottling, as it is already wearing its heart on its sleeve, but it will be very tasty during its bloom of peak drinking. 2022-2025. **89.**

2019 Chablis “Réserve du Vaudon”- Domaine Drouhin-Vaudon

The 2019 Chablis “Réserve du Vaudon” from the Drouhin family is a very stylish example of the vintage, offering up a vibrant aromatic constellation of lemon, sweet grapefruit, oyster shell, dried flowers and a nice touch of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the

wine is bright, full-bodied and shows nice tension, due to its underlying mineral grip as much as its ripe girdle of acidity. The wine has fine depth at the core, good focus and balance and a long, complex and quite delicious finish right out of the blocks. It is fairly low acid by Chablis standards, but has plenty to carry it nicely for at least the next decade. 2022-2032+. **91.**

2019 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Drouhin-Vaudon

The 2019 Chablis “Vaillons” from Domaine Drouhin-Vaudon is really an excellent and quite classic example of this lovely premier cru. The wine is a touch lower in octane than the Réserve de Vaudon (thirteen versus 13.5 percent) and delivers marvelous precision on the nose, with scents of tart orange, sweet grapefruit, chalky minerality, straw, a hint of oyster shell and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and still quite youthful, with a lovely core of perfectly ripe fruit, excellent mineral drive and cut, zesty acids and a long, complex and seamlessly balanced finish. This is certainly approachable today, but really deserves three or four years’ worth of bottle age to allow the wine to properly unwind. 2025-2050. **92.**

Vins Rouges de Maison Drouhin

2019 Givry- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Givry from Maison Joseph Drouhin is a pretty ripe wine, coming in listed at fourteen percent octane in this vintage. It offers up a bright, ripe and gently roasted nose of red and black cherries, cranberries, grilled meats, orange peel, a good base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and surprisingly soil-driven in personality for its ripeness level, with good mineral undertow, a fine core and a long, bright and fairly tannic young finish. This needs some time in the cellar to soften up its tannins, but should be a good drink once it is ready to go, but it is a touch sturdy out of the blocks and will need some bottle age to blossom. 2027-2045. **88.**

2019 Côte de Nuits-Villages- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin’s 2019 Côte de Nuits-Villages is a bit warm on the palate, though it comes in listed at an even fourteen percent alcohol in this vintage. The nose shows a touch of *confiture* to its components, but is also quite stylish, wafting from the glass in a mix of cherries, pomegranate, balsam bough, a good base of soil, a dollop of herb tones and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, elegant and nicely transparent, with a good core of fruit, moderate tannins and a long, complex finish that closes with just a hint of backend heat. This has depth and complexity, and though it is not as plush as a young 1990 red might have been at the same stage of development, both vintages share a slightly baked fruit tone that might suggest that they will age along a similar trajectory. Good juice. 2025-2045. **88.**

2019 Côte de Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Côte de Beaune bottling from Maison Joseph Drouhin is made up primarily of declassified *villages* and premier cru fruit from the commune of Beaune, so this is always one of the best values in their stellar lineup. The 2019 version is beautifully red fruity and expressive on the nose, offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, rose petals and just a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a good core, fine soil signature, buried tannins and a long, well-balanced and a ripe and already quite classy finish. This is quite open structurally and tastes great out of the blocks, but has a good underlying chassis and will age quite gracefully and be even more complete with some bottle age. A fine result. 2022-2040+. **90.**

2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin's 2019 Chorey-lès-Beaune is a lovely *villages* and always one of the best red wine values to be found in their stellar lineup. The wine is a nicely measured 13.5 percent this year and delivers a fine, red fruity aromatic mix of cherries, strawberries, gamebird, woodsmoke, a nice touch of soil, gentle herb tones and just a hint of oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with an excellent core of fruit, moderate tannins, good acids and a long, focused and complex finish. This is pretty fairly big for this bottling and probably would be happy to have at least a few years in the cellar to soften up its tannins a bit more completely, but in a pinch, pop it in a decanter for thirty minutes before serving and it will be a very tasty and charming bottle. 2025-2050. **90**.

2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Savigny-lès-Beaune AC from Maison Joseph Drouhin is a ripe, red fruity and quite stylish example of the vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and delivering a pretty nose of cherries, red currants, a touch of fruitcake, orange peel, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke, a hint of cedar and a lovely array of spice tones from both the whole clusters and its Savigny origins. On the palate the wine is bright, velvety on the attack and full, with a good core, fine soil signature, a bit of backend tannin and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. Like many red wines from this vintage, there is a "baked fruit" element here that is quite attractive and contrasts quite a bit with the very fresh fruit one generally finds in the 2020 vintage's reds. Good juice. 2027-2055. **90+**.

2019 Pommard- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Pommard AC from the Drouhin family is even a touch lower in octane than their Chorey-lès-Beaune bottling, coming in at an even thirteen percent alcohol and probably reflecting its having been picked just a day or two earlier in this vintage. The bouquet is pure and lovely, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, plums, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, a nice touch of sweet stem tones, bonfire, a dollop of new oak and a hint of lavender in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite elegant in profile (for young Pommard), with a sappy core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, focused and complex finish of impeccable balance. This is outstanding juice and one of the sleepers of the vintage! Pommard is so underrated. 2029-2075. **91+**.

2019 Volnay- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin has always made lovely examples of Volnay and I still have most of a case of their 1999 Clos des Chênes in my cellar as testament to this fact. Their 2019 Volnay AC is a beautiful wine, offering up a superb bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, a touch of stems, woodsmoke and a gentle foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and quite nicely generous on the attack, with a good core, lovely soil undertow, a fair bit of tannin and a long, complex and very well balanced finish. There is a touch of the baked fruit character of the vintage in evidence here, but much like the '89 red Burgs or the '82 Bordeaux, this is not a demerit, just a characteristic of the vintage. Good juice. 2029-2065. **90+**.

2019 Vosne-Romanée- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Vosne-Romanée from Maison Joseph Drouhin is really a beautifully precise and perfumed example of the vintage. The bouquet is quite classy, delivering scents of cherries, red plums, duck, a nice base of soil tones, mustard seed, Vosne spices, a touch of sweet stem tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and full-bodied, with good soil transparency, a solid core, tangy acids, buried tannins and a long, complex and well-balanced

finish. This does not show quite the same mid-palate amplitude out of the blocks as several of these other Drouhin AC bottlings, but it is also the kind of wine that puts on a bit of weight with bottle age. In any case, this is very good juice. 2027-2065. **91**.

2019 Chambolle-Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I have a fair range of vintages of Maison Drouhin's Chambolle Premier Cru bottling in my cellar, and given the push to raise overall quality standards of their range of *villages* cuvées in recent years, it is hard not to come to the conclusion that their 2019 Chambolle AC is every bit as impressive out of the blocks as my premier cru bottles in the cellar! The bouquet is deep, pure and lovely, offering up notes of red and black cherries, red plums, gamebird, mustard seed, a touch of bonfire, a fine base of chalky soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely generosity on the attack, firm tannins on the backend and a long, tangy and complex finish. This is listed at 13.5 percent octane, but it has some pretty impressive depth and backend stuffing. Fine, fine juice and a serious value (by today's contemporary pricing standards). 2028-2065. **91+**.

2019 Gevrey-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2019 Gevrey *villages* was as far I moved up the red wine "food chain" at Maison Drouhin in this vintage, given my request for half bottles, but it was not a bad place to stop, as it is really a very good AC. The wine offers up a classic nose of red and black cherries, mustard seed, grilled meats, dark soil tones, bonfire, sweet stem tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is complex, full and nicely solid at the core, with good soil signature, a bit of firm backend tannin and fine length and grip on the nascently complex finish. This will demand a bit of bottle age before it really starts to drink with generosity. Good juice. 2028-2065. **91**.

Bligny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

When I tasted Domaine Clos de la Chapelle's 2019s back in the summer of 2021, I had not tasted any other wines from the vintage yet and really had no idea of just how beautifully this estate had done in this hot summer. Eight months later, having now tasted a wide range of 2019s, the elegant sappiness and great transparency of these 2019s stands out far more brilliantly than it did back in the summer, when I really had no idea just how big and buxom so many 2019s had turned out in this vintage. The inherent elegance and fidelity to the underlying soil characteristics of each vineyard here are really quite beautiful, and if one goes back to the Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier's maxim that the best 2019s are absolutely delicious wines, then this is the category that Mark McConnell's range from the Domaine Clos de la Chapelle fall into in 2019. The range of wines here all came in around 13.5 percent octane in this vintage, with the white wines showing excellent acidity levels for the vintage, coupled to beautifully ripe and generous fruit tones. The red wines are svelte, poised and will be very velvety on the palate when they are ready to drink, with pure and sappy fruit tones, lovely mineral undertow and very refined senses of balance and backend energy. 2019 is a ringing success at Domaine Clos de la Chapelle!

Vins Blancs

2019 Beaune "Reversées" Blanc- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The 2019 Beaune "Reversées" Blanc from Clos de la Chapelle is a beautifully expressive wine right out of the blocks. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a vibrant blend of apple, passion fruit, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, honeysuckle and a stylish framing of vanillin

oak. On the palate the wine is ripe, full-bodied and juicy at the core, with good soil undertow, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This has the structure to age nicely over the next decade or so, but it is so easy to drink right from release that I have to imagine the vast majority of bottles of this wine will not see their fifth birthday! 2021-2030+. **90.**

2019 Pernand-Vergelesses “Sous Frétille”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The 2019 Sous Frétille from Clos de la Chapelle shares the same early seductive charm as the Beaune “Reversées”, but I have the sense that the superior mineral foundation here will also take the wine further into the future if cellared for an extended period of time. The bouquet is pure and complex, offering up scents of lemon, pear, a touch of fresh pineapple, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, a touch of lemon zest, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a lovey girdle of acidity, fine focus and backend bounce and a long, complex finish. This too is certainly going to be very easy to drink in its youth, but I have the sense that there are more layers here to unfold with a bit of bottle age and I would try to keep my hands off of bottles for at least a couple of years and let it blossom more completely. 2023-2035. **92.**

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Clos de la Chapelle is as beautifully cool customer for this vintage, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and offering up a pure and classic bouquet of apple, pear, spring flowers, a hint of iodine, a complex base of chalky soil tones, incipient notes of the *crème patissière* that will come with bottle age and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, zesty acids, impeccable balance and a long, pure and gently reductive finish. Believe me, I had no trouble drinking this sample bottle, but in reality this wine is still three to five years away from truly blossoming and deserves at least that much time in the cellar. It should prove to be beautifully long-lived. 2024-2055+. **94+.**

Vins Rouges

2019 Beaune “Champs Pimont”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

2019 vintage of Champs Pimont from Domaine Clos de la Chapelle is an absolute charmer on both the nose and palate. The wine is nicely ripe, coming in at 13.5 percent alcohol and offering up a pure and sappy bouquet of red plums, black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, a lovely base of soil tones, fresh-culled thyme, peonies and a discreet framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a sappy core, fine soil undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Though this is very accessible on the nose, the plush fruit covers up a lovely structural chassis, so I would do my best to not touch a bottle for at least the next eight to ten years and let it really open out. 2029-2075. **92.**

2019 Beaune “Teurons”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

These sixty-three year-old vines in Teurons have turned out a beautiful wine in the 2019 vintage. I really like the contrast in style between the domaine’s Champs Pimont and Teurons, as the former has the deeper soils and produces the more broad shouldered example of Beaune, whereas the high limestone content of Teurons always produces a slightly lighter, more dancing version of the commune. The 2019 Teurons shows a lovely streak of red fruit in its aromatic constellation of wild strawberries, cherries, *pigeon*, cocoa powder, chalky soil elements, roses, fresh thyme and a refined touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully transparent in personality, with a lovely core of red fruit, suave, buried tannins, fine

focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2075+. **92+**.

2019 Volnay “en Carelle”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

Domaine Clos de la Chapelle has fine old vines in the vineyard of en Carelle, with the vines now sixty to sixty-five years of age. The 2019 en Carelle is nicely light in color and offers up a marvelous bouquet of red and black cherries, a touch of pomegranate, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, a touch of venison, gentle smokiness, lovely spice tones and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully transparent, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, impeccable balance and a long, focused and complex finish. This is gorgeous Volnay in the making! 2029-2080. **93**.

2019 Volnay “Clos de la Chapelle”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The Clos de la Chapelle *monopole* has become one of my absolute favorite bottlings in the village of Volnay in a relatively short time, as 2019 is only the tenth vintage fashioned here since Mark O’Connell purchased this vineyard and started piecing together one of the Côte de Beaune’s finest estates. The 2019 Clos de la Chapelle comes in at 13.5 percent octane (as is the case with all of the domaine’s red wines in this vintage) and delivers a stunningly precise and deep bouquet of red plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, a touch of nutskin, youthful notes of sweet stem tones, a gorgeous base of soil, incipient notes of fresh nutmeg and a judicious foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with a sappy core of fruit, stellar soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, perfectly balanced and stunning finish. This is a great bottle of Volnay in the making, but though it is certainly approachable out of the blocks, please tuck it away in the cellar for a decade or so and let the fireworks really mount! 2029-2085. **94+**.

2019 Volnay “Taillepieds”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The Domaine Clos de la Chapelle’s Taillepieds parcel is beautifully placed, lying between the vines of the Marquis d’Angerville and the de Montille family in the heart of the vineyard. It does not hurt that the vines are now closing in on seventy years of age! The 2019 Taillepieds is beautifully black fruity and pure on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, duck, dark soil tones, a touch of hazelnut, woodsmoke, hints of the nutmeg to come with bottle age and a lovely foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and supremely elegant in personality, with a great core of black fruit, excellent transparency and grip, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This is an utterly refined young bottle of Taillepieds, and though it will demand cellaring to soften up properly, it should prove to be a very long-lived and stunning wine in due course. 2032-2085. **95**.

2019 Pommard “Chanlins” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

I have felt for many years that Chanlins is one of the most under-estimated *terroirs* in the village of Pommard, which itself is one of the least well-understood communes in all of Burgundy in the twenty-first century. Domaine Clos de la Chapelle has a parcel of very old vines here in Chanlins, now over ninety years of age, and they have produced a marvelous wine in 2019. The aromatic constellation is pure, red fruity and precise, offering up notes of cherries, pomegranate, quince, gamebird, a touch of youthful stem tones, fresh thyme, a gorgeously complex base of soil tones, gentle smokiness and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, sappy and complex finish. This is stunning wine in the making and one of the most refined young examples of Pommard I have ever tasted! 2031-2085. **94**.

2019 Pommard “Grands Epenots”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The 2019 Grands Epenots bottling from Clos de la Chapelle is another outstanding wine in the making, exuding the same purity, transparency and seamless structural chassis as is found in the Chanlins. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, plums, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, gamebird, a touch of youthful stem tones, bonfire, fresh thyme and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off stunning mid-palate depth, with plenty of black fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex and impeccably balanced finish. This is dynamite Pommard in the making as well, but it is more structured out of the blocks than the Chanlins and will demand a few years longer in the cellar before it starts to give up the goods. 2033-2085. **94.**

2019 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Clos de la Chapelle

The 2019 Corton “Bressandes” from the Domaine Clos de la Chapelle is a simply stunning wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, nascently complex and so beautifully delineated, offering up scents of cherries, red plums, red currants, spiced meats, raw cocoa, a hint of orange zest, a complex base of stony soil tones, gorgeous spice tones and deft framing of cedary new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and soil-driven, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, complex and very, very promising finish. This is going to be stunning Corton with sufficient bottle age, but despite its beautiful fruit component, it is built for the long haul and will need plenty of time in the cellar before it blossoms properly! 2034-2100. **95+.**



Pommard

Château de Pommard

Château de Pommard's winemaker, Emmanuel Sala, has made a fine lineup of 2019s. We tasted a few of the estate's négociant bottlings as well during my visit, which are labeled under the Famille Carabello-Baum label. The wines were excellent and if I had known just how extensive the négociant range has become here, I would have asked to try a few more during my visit! The two estate-bottled Pommards were excellent as well, cut in the more powerful style of many 2019s, but loaded with soil personality to augment the deep and concentrated fruit tones of the vintage. They will take plenty of time in the cellar to shed their tannins, but will be excellent wines once they are ready to drink.

2019 Pommard "Clos Marey-Monge" Monopole- Château de Pommard

The fully blended Clos Marey-Monge is always my favorite of the various bottlings produced here at Château de Pommard, as the various *lieux à dits* that make up the final cuvée always seem to dovetail so beautifully together and the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. The wine is nicely red fruity in 2019, offering up a deep and complex nose of red plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a nice touch of sweet stem tones from the whole clusters, woodsmoke and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, fine focus and grip, bright acids and a long, nascently complex and very well balanced finish. This will take some time to blossom, but it will be excellent! 2033-2085. **93.**

2019 Pommard "Simone" Monopole- Château de Pommard

It is funny, as every time I have the opportunity to taste each of the parcels that comprise the Château de Pommard *vignobles*, the Simone is my favorite of the range, and the wine is now bottled on its own, as well as included in the Clos Marey-Monge cuvée. However, this was the first time that I had ever tasted it bottled right alongside of the Clos Marey-Monge, and it further underscored how the blended cuvée is the most complex. That said, this too is an excellent example of the 2019 vintage, offering up a more black fruity bouquet of black cherries, plums, spiced meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, chewy and loaded with fruit in the mid-palate, with firm, chewy tannins, good focus and grip and a long, youthfully complex and promising finish. At the present time, this seems like it will need a few more years in the cellar to soften up its tannins than the Clos Marey-Monge. 2038-2085. **92+.**

2019 Bourgogne Blanc- Famille Carabello-Baum

The Bourgogne Blanc bottling from Château de Pommard is a lovely wine in 2019. The wine is barrel fermented and aged in ten percent new oak. It offers up a bright and classy nose of apple, quince, salty soil tones, just a touch of vanillin oak and a lovely range of floral tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent in personality, with good framing acids, a nice touch of soil and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2022-2030. **89.**

2019 Ladoix-Serrigny "les Gréchons" Blanc- Famille Carabello-Baum

The 2019 Ladoix-Serrigny "les Gréchons" from the domaine is a fine, fine bottle and an excellent value in this vintage. The bouquet is quite refined, wafting from the glass in a mix of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, a touch of fresh nutmeg and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, crisp and focused, with a good core, lovely soil signature and a long, zesty and well balanced finish. 2022-2035. **91.**

2019 Corton-Charlemagne- Famille Carabello-Baum

The 2019 Corton-Charlemagne here is a superb example of the vintage. The wine is raised entirely in new oak, but carries it beautifully. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a precise blend of pear, apple, chalky, stony soil tones, a touch of *crème patissière*, fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a superb core of fruit, impressive mineral undertow, bright, zesty acids and a long, focused and classy finish. Fine juice. 2026-2045. **93.**

Volnay

Domaine Michel Lafarge

I had the opportunity to taste three of the 2019s from the Lafarge family during my visit to the domaine in early December to sample the 2020 vintage here. All three were excellent wines and very much cut from the elegant and delicious side of the cloth for this vintage, with moderate alcohol levels, very pure, suave fruit tones, lovely soil signatures and impeccable balances. Stylistically, they reminded me very much of Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier's wines from this vintage, which is very high praise indeed! The Lafarge family began picking on September 9th in 2019, wishing to keep alcohol levels lower and fruit tones as fresh and vibrant as possible. Yields were down approximately forty percent in 2019 from a "normal" crop, but the resulting wines are svelte, perfumed, transparent and beautifully refined on both the nose and palate and will be cellar treasures for those fortunate enough to find an allocation.

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2019 Bourgogne rouge from Domaine Lafarge is a lovely example of the vintage. The nose is bright and nicely red fruity, offering up scents of cherries, red plums, a touch of summer truffle, a lovely base of soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full and shows lovely depth at the core, with a nice subplot of soil, just a bit of tannin and impressive length and grip on the classically balanced finish. The Lafarges' Bourgogne is always one of the top regional bottlings and the 2019 is no exception. Just give it a bit of bottle age. 2025-2045. **90.**

2019 Volnay "Vendanges Sélectionnées"- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Lafarge family's 2019 Volnay "Vendanges Sélectionnées" is excellent. The wine delivers a refined aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, gamebird, a lovely base of dark soil tones, the first hint of the black truffles to come, woodsmoke and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a good core, lovely soil signature, suave, buried tannins and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish that closes with just a touch of fresh herb tones from the whole clusters. Fine juice. 2028-2060. **91.**

2019 Volnay "Clos du Château des Ducs"- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Clos du Château des Ducs is beautifully red fruity in personality in 2019. The aromatic constellation delivers a refined blend of cherries, red plums, summer truffle, a lovely touch of cocoa powder, a complex base of soil tones, fresh thyme and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and soil transparency, impeccable balance, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, elegant and complex finish. This is a stunning bottle of young Volnay! 2035-2080+. **95.**

Domaine Joseph Voillot

Etienne Chaix fashioned a really superb range of wines in the 2019 vintage, and this is one of those domaines where the 2019s seem a tad less ripe and powerful in personality than the wines from the following vintage of 2020. The domaine has a ton of old vines in their vineyard parcels and perhaps these old vines were able to better keep the maturation process rolling along during the severe drought period between the two blazing heat spikes that hit at the outsets of July and August, so that there was no need to wait for tannins to ripen up further once sugars had accumulated to the point where starting to pick made sense. Consequently, the entire range of the Domaine Voillot 2019s all come in between thirteen and 13.5 percent in octane, which is happily on the low side for this vintage. The two white wines that I tasted from Monsieur Chaix in 2019 have excellent spines of acidity for the vintage, coupled to lovely, ripe and generous fruit tones and excellent mineral drive. The 2019 reds here are exceptional across the board, with all of these old vines having produced wines of impeccable balance, fine-grained tannins and really beautiful, often quite plummy fruit tones and great transparency. The 2019 reds at Domaine Voillot will certainly drink a bit sooner than the domaine's more powerful 2020 reds, but given their beautiful sense of balance, they may well prove to also be every bit as long-lived. An outstanding vintage here in 2019!

Vins Blancs

2019 Meursault “les Cras”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2019 vintage of les Cras from Etienne Chaix is a beautiful bottle of Meursault, with the richer soils of this cru (it lies close to Santenots) giving the wine just gorgeous fruit tones on both the nose and palate. These vines were planted in 1963 and 1980, so even the younger section is now into its prime. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a gently reductive mix of apple, pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, musky floral tones, a fine base of soil and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a superb core of fruit, good acids and grip, lovely balance and a long, wide open and bouncy finish. This is already drinking quite nicely, though it will have no trouble aging gracefully. 2021-2032. **90.**

2019 Meursault “les Chevalières”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The Domaine Voillot's fifteen *ares* of vines in Chevalières were planted in 1979, so these celebrated their fortieth birthday in 2019. The wine is excellent this year, offering up a bright and classy nose of apple, passion fruit, a hint of pineapple, almond, chalky minerality, iodine, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, pure and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral drive and cut, zesty acids and a long, soil-driven and complex finish. This shares the same early charm as the les Cras, but it has more mineral undertow and is more complex as a result. Great value! 2021-2035. **92.**

Vins Rouges

2019 Bourgogne Rouge “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The old vine Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Voillot is produced from three parcels of vines (in two *lieux à dits*) that were planted respectively in 1953, 1966 and 1972. The wine comes in at thirteen percent octane this year and offers up a lovely, red fruity nose of cherries, strawberries, a hint of quince, woodsmoke, lovely spice tones and a fine base of soil elements. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and tangy, with a pretty core of fruit, good soil signature, ripe, moderate tannins, bouncy acids and a long, still fairly youthful finish. Like most top flight

Bourgogne Rouge bottlings, this needs a few years in the cellar to blossom, but it will be excellent in due course. 2024-2035+. **89.**

2019 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The average age of vines that go into this lovely V.V. bottling are now in excess of fifty years of age (with the oldest plots having gone into the ground in 1946 and 1947), hailing from a blend of six different *villages* level parcels that total up to 1.375 hectares. The 2019 comes in at an even thirteen percent octane and offers up a beautifully expressive bouquet of black plums, red and black cherries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a plush core of fruit, excellent soil signature and grip, ripe tannins and a long, beautifully balanced and very promising finish. This is a first class *villages*! 2029-2065. **91.**

2019 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

As I have mentioned in the past, the average age of vines in the Pommard V.V. bottling are a touch older than those for the Volnay from Domaine Voillot, with these vines closing in on an average of sixty years of age now. The bouquet of the 2019 is excellent, offering up a youthful blend of cherries, quince, pomegranate, *pigeon*, bonfire, a fine base of soil, nutskin, a whisper of oak and a gently floral topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, structured and tangy, with a lovely core of red fruit, good soil signature, ripe, well-integrated and chewy tannins and a long, nascently complex and impeccably balanced finish. This is a proper young Pommard and will need cellaring time to let its structural chassis to soften up, but it is going to be an excellent wine in due course. 2032-2070. **91.**

2019 Beaune “aux Coucheries”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The domaine only has a bit more than twenty-three *ares* of vines here in aux Coucheries, so this is one of their most limited red wine bottlings. The vines here were planted in 1964 and 1981, so even the younger section is approaching old age. The 2019 aux Coucheries from Etienne Chaix is excellent on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, coffee bean, a dollop of fresh herbs, dark soil tones, gamebird, a lovely touch of violet and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely structured out of the blocks, with a fine core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins, good soil inflection and a long, poised and very promising finish. This will need a half dozen years to get generous on the palate and is going to be a lovely drink for many decades, once it blossoms. 2027-2065. **91+.**

2019 Volnay “les Fremiets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Etienne Chaix gets to work with plenty of old vines in the family’s parcel in Fremiets, as these vines were planted respectively in 1978, 1950 and 1932! Like all of the premier crus here, this wine sees about twenty percent new oak each year. The 2019 Fremiets is simply outstanding on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up a very pure and perfumed mix of red and black cherries, a hint of pomegranate, plums, smoked meats, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, violets, lavender, fresh thyme and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and tightly-knit, with a sappy core of fruit, great soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and outstanding length and grip on the poised and perfectly balanced finish. This is superb juice- the pure unadulterated beauty of classic Volnay! 2030-2085+. **93+.**

2019 Volnay “les Champans”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

I have loved the domaine’s bottling of Champans for many years, as I would often look to order this at the Cellier Volnaysien restaurant next door to the cellars when I was dining there. Like most of the family’s premier cru holdings, these are old vines, with the sections having been

planted in 1985, 1971 and 1934! Etienne Chaix has made a great Champans in the 2019 vintage, delivering a superbly complex bouquet of red and black cherries, spit-roasted *pigeon*, raw cocoa, a gorgeously complex base of soil, lovely spice tones, a hint of black tea, woodsmoke, gentle notes of hazelnut and a dollop of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and nascently complex, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, balanced and very classy finish. This is a stellar Champans in the making! 2032-2085+. **94.**

2019 Pommard “Clos Micault”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Domaine Voillot’s fourteen *ares* of vines in the Clos Micault were planted in 1958. This is a beautifully elegant young Pommard, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, red plums, woodsmoke, grilled venison, a beautiful base of soil, raw cocoa, a touch of mustard seed, fresh nutmeg and a discreet framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a great core of fruit, lovely soil undertow and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and focused finish. For Burgundy fans searching around for a supremely elegant example of Pommard, this vintage of Clos Micault from Etienne Chaix will be right up your alley! 2030-2080. **93.**

2019 Pommard “les Pézerolles”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

To my palate, Pézerolles is another of the most underrated premier crus in all of the Côte d’Or, as this is a very special *terroir*. Jean-Pierre Charlot and Etienne Chaix have vines here that are fifty-six years of age, so they are right in their prime. The bouquet of the 2019 is excellent, offering up a youthful blend of cherries, quince, a touch of orange peel, a fine base of soil, gamebird, nutskin, cocoa powder, fresh thyme and a nice touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is bright, red fruity in personality and full-bodied, with great soil signature, firm, ripe tannins, tangy acids and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex and extremely promising finish. This is a properly-structured young Pommard, but it will be a very refined wine once it is ready to drink. 2032-2085. **92+.**

2019 Pommard “les Epenots”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

These vines are almost my age, as they were planted in 1961 (which I always say is my birth year when visiting in Bordeaux cellars ☺- I was actually born at the end of November of 1960, so just missed that great vintage) and they have produced an absolutely gorgeous wine in 2019. The nose wafts from the glass in a very refined, sophisticated blend of red plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, a complex base of soil, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a hint of nutskin and a suave framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nascently complex, with a superb core, great soil undertow, ripe, seamless tannins, tangy acids and a very long, very refined and promising finish. Great juice in the making! 2032-2085. **94.**

2019 Pommard “les Rugiens”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Domaine Voillot’s holdings in Rugiens *bas* are not huge, totally just over a quarter hectare, but they too were planted in 1961. This bottling has turned out stunningly well in 2019, offering up a deep, beautifully complex and very, very precise bouquet of red and black cherries, black plums, raw cocoa, a stunning base of soil, a touch of mustard seed, spit-roasted *pigeon*, woodsmoke, black tea, gentle spice tones and a nice framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a rock solid core of fruit, firm, buried tannins, tangy acids and great backend mineral drive on the long, complex and impeccably balanced finish. This is grand cru quality without a doubt! 2033-2085. **94+.**



Meursault

Domaine Buisson-Charles

I did not have a chance to visit Domaine Buisson-Charles during my trip to Burgundy in December of last year, but I did have the opportunity to taste one of the estate's 2019 Volnays while in the cellars at Domaine Coche-Dury, as Monsieur Philippe Alliet and his fellow tasters brought along a bottle of the Volnay "Santenots" to share with Raphaël Coche after we had sampled the Coche family's 2019s. Upon returning to New York, I learned that 2019 is an important vintage for Domaine Buisson-Charles, as it is the first vintage of Louis Essa to be officially in charge of the family domaine. Previously, the estate had been run by Catherine Buisson and her husband, Patrick Essa, since the retirement of Catherine's father, Michel Buisson, in 2009. But, from the 2019 vintage forwards, it is their son, Louis Essa who is now manning the helm of this estate. I very much enjoyed the 2019 Volnay "Santenots" that I tasted and hope to have an opportunity to visit the domaine on a coming trip to the region.

2019 Volnay "Santenots"- Domaine Buisson-Charles

The 2019 Volnay "Santenots" from Domaine Buisson-Charles is a very good example of the vintage, offering up a bright and complex nose of plums, cherries, cocoa powder, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very nicely balanced, with a good core of pure fruit, good soil signature, moderate tannins

and a long, complex and focused finish. Good juice that will want a handful of years to soften up its measured tannins. 2026-2060. **92.**

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 was one of the very few vigneron I tasted with in December who actually started picking in August of 2019, but only on the 31st of the month and this was only for a parcel of young vines in his Bourgogne Blanc which were a bit ahead of the curve for ripeness. The rest of his plots of vines were not picked until starting on September 3rd, which is still nearly a month earlier than what was customary picking time when I first started visiting Burgundy in the early 1990s, but not all that early by contemporary standards. The domaine's yields were very, very small in 2019, as problems at flowering led to both coulure and millerandage in this vintage, so that the crop ranged from thirty-eight hectoliters per hectare in the most prolific parcels to only seventeen hectoliters per hectare in the Ente family's plot of Petits Charrons. The wines are generally around 13.5 percent octane in 2019, with fine spines of acidity, classic underlying soil signatures and really beautiful, ripe and pure fruit tones. The lower level bottlings will drink well from release and the upper level bottlings have the balance to age very well indeed and will really deserve at least a handful of years in the cellar to blossom properly.

2019 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Bourgogne Blanc from Monsieur Ente comes in at 13.6 percent octane in this vintage and is a lovely wine, with a wide open and succulent personality. The nose delivers scents of apple, pear, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, apple blossoms and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a good core, sound framing acids and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2022-2032. **89.**

2019 Meursault- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Meursault *villages* bottling from the Ente family is another very tasty and accessible wine. The nose is vibrant and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, passion fruit, just a hint of papaya, almond, citrus zest, vanillin oak and a lovely base of chalky soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent complexity and bounce, good acidity and a long, focused finish that shows just a hint of exotic fruit on the close. Very tasty. 2022-2045. **91.**

2019 Meursault “Clos des Ambres”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Clos des Ambres has a lovely sense of salinity to it this year from the very low yields. The bouquet delivers a range of pear, apple, hazelnuts, a touch of iodine, gentle smokiness, a fine base of limestone and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and deep at the core, with lovely mineral drive and grip, zesty acids and fine focus and balance on the long, classy finish. I might give this a couple of years in the cellar, just to let another layer of complexity unfurl, but it is already very tasty and I have to imagine that those who drink it right out of the blocks are not going to regret having done so! 2024-2045+. **92.**

2019 Meursault “Petits Charrons”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

I was wondering what the style of the 2019 Petits Charrons might be, given how miniscule the yields were in this parcel this year. I feared we might see a super concentrated wine, but that is most emphatically not the case, as this is a very classical rendition of Petits Charrons from Domaine Ente, offering up a beautifully complex bouquet of apple, passion fruit, almond, a potpourri of fruit blossoms, complex, chalky minerality, iodine, and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is expressive, precise and full, with lovely mid-palate depth, great mineral drive, bouncy acids and excellent length and grip on the seamlessly balanced finish. Great juice. 2026-2050. **93.**

2019 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Referts from Arnaud Ente is a lovely wine, offering up plenty of ripe fruit beautifully synthesized to its underlying minerality. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of nectarine, orange peel, chalky minerality, musky floral tones, a touch of almond and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with good transparency and grip, bright acids and a long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is perfectly approachable today, but there are clearly more layers to unfold with a bit of bottle age, so try to keep one’s hands off of bottles in the cellar for at least a few years. 2025-2050. **93.**

2019 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

These old vines, planted in 1956, seem to have weathered the vagaries of the growing season beautifully in 2019 and the wine has turned out splendidly. The aromatic constellation delivers a blend of pear, tangerine, passion fruit, a touch of citrus peel, hazelnut, chalky minerality, vanillin oak and a topnote of acacia blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, precise and full, with excellent depth in the mid-palate, bright, racy acids and a long, crisp and minerally finish. Fine, fine juice. 2026-2050+. **94.**

2019 Meursault “la Sève du Clos”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Meursault “la Sève du Clos” from Domaine Ente is another beautiful example of the vintage. The bouquet is bright and complex, delivering scents of passion fruit, tangerine, pear, iodine, hazelnuts, a fine base of chalky soil tones, a hint of geranium and a lovely foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is focused, full-bodied and very precise, with an excellent core, bright, bouncy acids and fine focus and grip on the long, complex and soil-driven finish. This is a beautiful bottle of Meursault. 2026-2050+. **94.**

2019 Meursault “la Goutte d’Or”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Arnaud Ente’s 2019 Goutte d’Or is a stunningly beautiful wine. The bouquet soars from the glass in a complex mix of passion fruit, pear, apple, orange zest, a refined base of limestone minerality, iodine, hazelnuts, vanillin oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and laser-like in its focus, with a great core, superb mineral drive, perfect balance and stunning length on the stunning finish. This is brilliant wine. 2029-2060+. **95.**

2019 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Bourgogne Rouge from Monsieur Ente is nicely red fruity in personality in this vintage, offering up scents of cherries, red berries, a touch of raw cocoa, woodsmoke and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a good core and transparency, a bit of backend tannin and a long, well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2024-2040. **89.**

2019 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2019 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu” from Domaine Arnaud Ente is a lovely example of the vintage that is very classically proportioned. The nose delivers a refined combination of red and black cherries, pomegranate, a touch of dark berry, gamebird, dark soil tones, bonfire, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of currant leaf. On the palate the wine is full, focused and nicely ripe, with excellent depth at the core, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish of impeccable balance and fine potential. 2030-2080. **93.**



Domaine Bernard Millot

These were the first wines I had tasted from Emilien Millot, who has taken over direction of the family's eight hectare estate from his father Bernard. The Millot family has fine parcels in Meursault, Puligny and Beaune. Emilien farms a fine range of older vines, with almost all of the Millots' parcels ranging from forty to more than fifty years of age. Domaine Millot's importer, Peter Weygandt, kindly sent me a range of the estate's 2018s to taste for this report, as the 2019s had not yet landed here in New York. Given that I had never had a chance to taste any of Emilien Millot's wines, I was more than happy to tackle a range of 2018s and hope to have a chance to visit the domaine in the future and get a deeper sense of his methodology in both the vineyards and cellars. These were lovely 2018s, with a slightly more fruit-driven aspect to their personalities that is typical of the top 2018 white Burgundies, at least in comparison to the wines from 2019, which hail from much lower crop levels than the 2018s. The wines here are quite refined and stylish, with moderate alcohol levels for 2018 (all around thirteen percent), zesty acids and lovely complexity and charm that will make them lovely drinks from an early age.

2018 Bourgogne Chardonnay- Domaine Bernard Millot

The 2018 Bourgogne Chardonnay from Domaine Bernard Millot is a good solid example, offering plenty of nicely ripe fruit, a dollop of soil and good bounce and length on the finish. The wine is pretty fruit-driven in style, but at thirteen percent octane, also nicely bright and zesty, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a touch of hazelnut and spring flowers. On the

palate the wine is full-bodied, plump and juicy, with sound framing acids and sneaky length on the finish. This is not overly complex, but it is quite tasty. 2022-2025. **87.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “les Corvées”- Domaine Bernard Millot

Les Corvées is a *lieu à dit* in northern Puligny that lies right on the Meursault border. Monsieur Millot’s 2018 version comes in at thirteen percent alcohol and delivers a pretty and nicely floral bouquet of white peach, apple, a bit of chalky soil, citrus peel, musky floral tones and a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, focused and full, with a plush core of fruit, a nice touch of soil, fairly gentle acidity, but good balance and grip on the long and succulent finish. Like the Bourgogne Blanc, this is fairly fruit-driven in personality this year, but does offer depth, length and good backend lift. It will want drinking up in its youth. 2022-2027. **89.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine Bernard Millot

Emilien Millot’s 2018 Meursault *villages* bottling is really quite lovely. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of pear, tangerine, hazelnut, a fine base of chalky soil, geranium and a nice touch of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied and shows better mineral undertow than the Puligny, with respectable depth at the core, solid framing acids, good focus and grip and a long, classy finish. The higher yields of 2018 show here just a tad in a bit of *fluidité* in the mid-palate, but I still have to give this a slight nod over the above wine, due to its superior soil signature and bounce. 2022-2030. **89+.**

2018 Meursault “les Vireuils”- Domaine Bernard Millot

The 2018 Vireuils from Emilien Millot is a lovely example of the vintage. The wine comes in at an even thirteen percent in octane and offers up a bright, vibrant nose of apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, lovely chalky minerality, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and drinking with lovely generosity, with a fine core of fruit, good acids and lovely cut and grip on the complex and very nicely balanced finish. This is fully ready to drink at four years of age, but has the balance to also continue to age nicely for at least the remainder of the decade. Fine juice. 2022-2030+. **91.**

2018 Meursault “les Gouttes d’Or”- Domaine Bernard Millot

The 2018 Meursault “les Gouttes d’Or” from Domaine Bernard Millot is another beautifully measured wine from this torrid vintage, again coming in listed at a svelte (for 2018) thirteen percent alcohol. The bouquet is lovely and already beautifully expressive, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, a touch of tangerine, passion fruit, buttered almonds, iodine, a fine base of soil and a lovely, understated framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, complex and zesty, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral undertow, lovely focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and complex finish. This is a touch richer than the Vireuils 2018, but then again, this is one of the warmer microclimates among the premier crus of Meursault, in viewed in that context, it is quite refined in profile. This is a lovely bottle of les Gouttes d’Or. 2022-2032+. **92+.**

Puligny-Montrachet

Domaine Jacques Carillon

Jacques Carillon’s 2019 vintage wines are very good and quite forward in style. He began picking on September 10th in 2019 and brought in wines that are bright, generous in style and nicely ripe, but show no signs of sur maturité. The wines are a bit higher in octane than their counterparts from the 2020 vintage, as the 2019s fall between 13.8 and 14.3 percent alcohol in this solar vintage. But, that said, they have good acids and soil signatures and do not suffer from

any signs of blowsiness or overripe aromatics or flavors. They are just plush, juicy and complex white Burgundies that beg to be drunk fairly early on in their lives, but with the balance to also age gracefully. I did not make a note of the specific alcohol levels of the individual wines in 2019, but would assume that the villages level bottlings were the higher in octane, due to their having been picked after the premier and grand cru parcels of vines. To Monsieur Carillon's mind, the 2019s are a lovely complement to his range of 2020s, as the latter vintage will really need some bottle age to blossom and show at their best, whereas the 2019s will be delicious right from the outset and will be the perfect vintage to enjoy while waiting for the 2020s to unfold with bottle age. The villages bottlings here are fairly fruit-driven in personality this year, but not without good, solid underlying soil signatures, but it is really when one reaches the level of the premier crus that the wines begin to be more defined by their terroirs and are really quite impressively mineral-driven for the vintage. Though they will be very tasty in their youth, I would be inclined to give the premier crus at least a few years in the cellar before drinking them, just to allow their secondary layers to come to the fore. As always, the domaine's Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet is simply stunning in 2019 and will be a beautifully long-lived example of the vintage.

2019 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2019 Puligny *villages* from Monsieur Carillon is a very pretty and succulent example of the vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a ripe and generous blend of apple, tangerine, a touch of pineapple, chalky soil tones, a hint of hazelnut and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely plush on the attack, with a good core, fine focus and grip, good soil undertow and a long, zesty and very nicely balanced finish. 2022-2035+. **89+**.

2019 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

Jacques Carillon's 2019 Chassagne AC is another very stylish and wide open bottle. The wine delivers a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, spring flowers, fresh almond, chalky soil tones and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and generous, with a fine core of ripe fruit, lovely balance and cut, bouncy acids and fine focus on the long, balanced and complex finish. Good juice. 2022-2035+. **89+**.

2019 Puligny-Montrachet "Champs Canet" - Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2019 Champs Canet from Domaine Carillon is a beautiful wine, with far more mineral definition than one finds in the very tasty Puligny *villages* this year. The bouquet is vibrant and complex, wafting from the glass in a lovely blend of lemon, pear, apple, chalky soil tones, fresh almond, orange zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and fairly reserved in profile (particularly for a 2019), with fine depth at the core, zesty acids, excellent focus and cut and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. 2024-2045. **92**.

2019 Puligny-Montrachet "Perrières" - Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2019 Puligny-Montrachet "Perrières" from Jacques Carillon is an excellent wine, and again, is a bit more reserved in personality than the village wines this year. The nose delivers a fine constellation of pear, nectarine, *crème patissière*, stony minerality, fresh almond, vanillin oak and a distinct note of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine mineral undertow, bouncy acids and impressive focus and balance on the long and nascently complex finish. 2025-2045. **92+**.



2019 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

Monsieur Carillon’s 2019 Referts is also excellent, and probably the premier cru in the domaine’s lineup this year that will be the most insistent on a bit of bottle age prior to drinking. The beautiful bouquet offers up scents of pear, apple, fresh lemon, pastry cream, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, fruit blossoms, vanillin oak and citrus zest. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and very pure on the attack, with excellent mid-palate depth, bright acids and impressive focus and grip on the long and very classy finish. 2026-2045. **93.**

2019 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2019 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Carillon is a stellar young wine and this was clearly one of the finest 2019 white Burgundies that I tasted in preparation for this article. The wine offers up a superb aromatic constellation of white peach, apple, a touch of fresh pineapple, a beautifully complex base of limestone minerality, vanillin oak, spring flowers and lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and impeccably balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, superb soil signature, bright, zesty acids and a very, very long, complex and superbly balanced finish. Great juice. 2029-2060. **95.**

Domaine Bachey-Legros

I have been very, very impressed with the quality of the wines I have tasted from Domaine Bachey-Legros in the last couple of vintages and this is another domaine that is a must stop on my next trip to the Burgundy region. The brothers Samuel and Lénaïc Legros currently

run this fine domaine, in conjunction with their mother Christiane, which encompasses eighteen hectares of vines located in the villages of Santenay, Maranges and Chassagne-Montrachet. The family has been fans of old vines for many generations now and so today, most of their parcels were planted between 1935 to 1955! The 2019s here are quite typical of the vintage, with the reds svelte, ripe and harmoniously structured wines that are fairly elegant in the context of the vintage (other than perhaps the more buxom Maranges “le Goty” bottling) and the whites are nicely plush wines that are a touch higher in octane than the reds and likely to be at their best in their earlier years. This is a domaine I did not get a chance to visit in December to taste their 2020s, but I would suspect that the Legros brothers realized a bit less octane across the board with their 2020s than was the case with the 2019s, but we will find out when I get a chance to taste the newer vintage. But, there is still plenty to like in the range of 2019s I tasted here and this is clearly a name to get to know better, as the winemaking here is really good, there are tons of old vines and for the time being, the prices offer very good value!

Vins Blancs

2019 Santenay “Clos des Gravières”- Domaine Bachey-Legros

The 2019 Santenay “Clos des Gravières” from Domaine Bachey-Legros is a stylish example of the vintage. The wine comes in listed at 14.5 percent octane in this solar vintage, but one would never guess this from its beautifully precise bouquet of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, *crème patissière*, almond, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, ripe and complex, with a lovely core, good soil signature, sound framing acids and a long, vibrant and gently heady finish. The ripeness is a bit more evident on the palate than on the nose, which gives the wine a slightly four-square aspect this year, but this is a good, solid bottle. 2022-2028. **89.**

2019 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” Les Petits Clos V.V.- Domaine Bachey-Legros

I love these old vines from the domaine, as they were sixty-nine years of age in the 2019 vintage, and this has become one of my absolute favorite bottlings of Morgeot in the commune. The 2019 version is again pretty ripe, in the style of the vintage, coming in at 14.5 percent alcohol, but also complex and nicely delineated. The lovely bouquet offers up scents of pear, apple, casaba melon, acacia blossoms, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, fresh almond and a suave framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very well-balanced, with a silky core of fruit, lovely soil signature and grip, excellent focus and a long, zesty and classy finish. This most emphatically does not show the same bit of missing precision on the palate as the Clos des Gravières, and I would suggest that the sole demerit this lovely wine will have from its relatively elevated alcohol level in 2019 is that it will not last quite as long in the cellar as slightly cooler profile vintages! A delicious wine. 2022-2032. **91.**

Vins Rouges

2019 Maranges “Le Goty” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Bachey-Legros

The 2019 Maranges “Le Goty” Vieilles Vignes from Domaine Bachey-Legros is made from fine old vines, having been planted all the way back in 1945. The wine is quite ripe in 2019, coming in listed at 14.5 percent octane and offering plenty of flesh and depth on the palate. The complex bouquet reminds me of many a young 1990 red Burgundy, offering up baked fruit tones of red and black cherries, plums, a bit of chocolate, roasted venison, balsam bough, dark soil tones and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, broad-shouldered and plush at the core, with ripe tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and slightly

heady finish. This is a tasty, buxom bottle that may be just a touch too ripe for some palates, but is certainly not burdened by overt characteristics of *sur maturité* (like a 2003 might show out of the blocks) and delivers admirable complexity and length on the finish. It has plenty of generous fruit to cover its tannins, but I would be inclined to tuck it away for at least a few years and let them soften up just a bit more before drinking the wine. 2025-2045+. **88.**

2019 Santenay “Clos des Hâtes” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Bachey-Legros

The 2019 Santenay “Clos des Hâtes” Vieilles Vignes bottling from Domaine Bachey-Legros is a lovely young wine. This is a touch lower in octane than the Maranges “Le Goty”, coming in at fourteen percent and showing far more purity on the nose, delivering scents of cherries, pomegranate, gamebird, a beautiful base of soil, woodsmoke, peonies and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and red fruity in personality, with a fine core, excellent soil undertow, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and very classy finish. This is an excellent wine in the making! 2028-2060. **90.**

2019 Santenay “Clos Rousseau” 1er Cru Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Bachey-Legros

The Bachey brothers vines in Clos Rousseau were all planted between 1935 and 1955, so these are truly “old vines”. The 2019 version comes in at 13.5 percent octane and offers up a beautiful bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, incipient notes of black truffle, *pigeon* and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, focused and full-bodied, with lovely sappiness at the core, impressive transparency and bounce, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish of impressive elegance and bounce. This is one of the best young bottles of Santenay rouge I have ever tasted. 2029-2065+. **92.**

Mercury

Domaine Michel Juillot

To my palate, Laurent Juillot has been on a serious “hot streak” these last half dozen years and I cannot wait to have an opportunity to visit the estate in person and taste out of cask here. The selection of 2019s from the domaine that I tasted for this report were very much a synthesis of the inherently elegant and soil-driven style of Domaine Juillot, coupled to the slightly more solar style of the vintage. This translated to a Clos de Barraults Blanc that was very pretty and open, but a tad lower in acidity than is customary, and reds that were generally a bit more black fruity in personality than in many vintages, with firm, well-integrated tannins and fine potential for mid to longer-term cellaring. The reds all came in listed around fourteen percent octane, with the exception of the old vines that comprise the les Vignes de Maillonge bottling, which tips the scales at a cooler thirteen percent (and has far more red fruit personality to show for it). But, all of the wines are excellent examples of the 2019 vintage and the red wines, once they have softened up their tannins a bit, will repay cellaring very nicely and once again, offer stunning values.

Vins Blancs

2019 Rully “les Thivaux”- Domaine Michel Juillot

The 2019 Rully “les Thivaux” from Domaine Michel Juillot is quite ripe for this bottling, coming in at a full fourteen percent and probably was one of the last white wine parcels picked by the estate. Despite its ripeness, it is very pretty and bright on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, lemon, fresh pineapple, lovely minerality, orange blossoms and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is vibrant, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, good, sound acids and a long, balanced and bouncy finish. I really

like this, but I would opt for drinking it on the early side, as I have to imagine that it is at its most flattering at the moment (though it is certainly balanced enough to age gracefully over the mid-term). It is not quite as complex as it is in less solar vintages, but it is very tasty. 2022-2030. **90.**

2019 Mercurey “Clos des Barraults” 1er Cru- Domaine Michel Juillot

The Clos des Barraults is one of the younger vine bottlings from Laurent Juillot, as these vines were planted in 1989 and 1995. But, the *terroir* here is very complex, with chalk, clay, gravel, marl and small stones always leaving its footprint on the wine. The 2019 Clos des Barraults comes in at 13.5 percent octane, was raised in twenty percent new casks and delivers a very refined, vibrant nose of pear, apple, fresh almond, apple blossoms, a complex base of chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with solid acids for the vintage, lovely bounce and a long, poised and beautifully balanced finish. This does not have the cut and grip of a vintage such as 2017, but it is drinking with style and grace already and will not disappoint if drunk over the next decade. 2022-2032. **91.**



Vins Rouges

2019 Mercurey “le Meix Juillot”- Domaine Michel Juillot

The 2019 le Meix Juillot bottling from Laurent Juillot is fairly ripe this year, coming in at fourteen percent octane, but also, impressively precise and transparent down to its soil. The bouquet is complex and classy, combining a nice mix of red and black fruit in its nose of black

cherries, pomegranate, bonfire, roasted gamebird, dark soil tones and just a touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, focused and full, with a fine core, excellent soil signature and grip, ripe, chewy tannins and lovely length and grip on the focused and well-balanced finish. This is a fine bottle in the making, but it will demand some bottle age before it softens up properly. 2027-2055. **90.**

2019 Mercurey “les Vignes de Maillonge”- Domaine Michel Juillot

The Juillot family’s les Vignes de Maillonge is planted to older vines than the Meix Juillot parcels, with the oldest vines having gone in the ground in 1958. These older vines have handled the heat spikes of 2019 quite well, with the wine tipping the scales at thirteen percent octane and offering up a precise bouquet of red and black cherries, a hint of blood orange, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a fine base of soil tones, a nice touch of cinnamon and a deft framing of cedary oak from the fifteen percent new casks used for this cuvée. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely well-knit out of the blocks, with lovely mineral drive, a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a nice bounce of acidity on the backend that adds focus and lift on the long finish. This is a very classy *villages* bottling! 2027-2055. **91.**

2019 Mercurey “Clos Tonnerre” Premier Cru- Domaine Michel Juillot

The Clos Tonnerre is also planted to nice old vines, as these are sixty-one years of age. The exposition here is directly south, so this is a warmer vineyard and the 2019 reflects this, coming in this year at fourteen percent octane. It delivers a fine, black fruity nose of black cherries, dark berries, venison, chicory, chalky soil tones, bonfire and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with a fine core of fruit, a fair bit of backend tannins, good balance and grip and a long, chewy finish. This is fairly structured out of the blocks and will need bottle age to soften up. 2029-2065. **90.**

2019 Mercurey “les Champs Martins” Premier Cru- Domaine Michel Juillot

Laurent Juillot’s 2019 les Champs Martins was raised in thirty percent new oak, which is a bit more than the Clos Tonnerre. These vines are in their prime as well, being nearly fifty years of age, with the exposition of the vineyard facing to the southwest. The wine this year also tips the scales at fourteen percent and offers up a complex nose of red and black cherries, smoked duck, dark soil tones, a touch of juniper berry, woodsmoke and a nice touch of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is bright, complex and full-bodied, with excellent focus and balance, a lovely core, impressive soil signature and a long, ripely-tannic and very classy finish. This too is a bit chewy out of the blocks, so patience will be rewarded, but it is so well balanced that it is really not all that hard to drink in its youthful guise! 2028-2065. **92.**

2019 Mercurey “Clos des Barraults” Premier Cru- Domaine Michel Juillot

The 2019 Mercurey “Clos des Barraults” from the Juillot family was also raised in thirty percent new oak and comes in listed at fourteen percent octane in this vintage. The wine is ripe, but also beautiful transparent in personality, offering up a refined bouquet of black cherries, a touch of dark berry, coffee bean, a lovely base of soil, smoked meats, a bit of nutty new oak and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full and well-balanced, with a fine core of black fruit, good soil undertow and grip, buried tannins and a long, complex and promising finish. This too is an excellent wine in the making. 2028-2065. **92.**