

WINE News

Burgundy to enjoy today.



SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 FEATURES

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This Is the Year to Buy Burgundy!

By Trey Beffa

The 2015 red Burgundies have been pouring in—literally! Our staff has been a bit surprised at the level of ripeness and richness of these wines, especially in contrast to the 2013 and 2014 red Burgundies we have had over the last few years, which have been much leaner and lighter overall. The 2015s really jump out of the glass. Obviously, these wines are still very young, and many were just shipped. They should start to really come together over the next 4–6 months. Keep an eye out for many of the top producers, which are landing weekly, along with many of our Direct Import producers. Many of these DIs are going to offer tremendous value—from a region where value is not easy to find!

Along with the arrival of the 2015s there has been a barrage of killer deals in the Burgundy department lately! To make a long story short, these buys stem from wineries changing importers or suppliers in the United States. The question always is, what to do with the remaining inventory that the old supplier has, if the new supplier is not willing to buy it. Usually, some sort of fire sale takes place, and as a retailer, we love it when this happens. We have seen some great buys from Aurélien Verdet, Philippe Colin, Bruno Colin, Michel Niellon and Jean-Louis Chavy. There are a few of these wines still available. Three of our favorites are below:

2014 Domaine Bruno Colin Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge Vieilles Vignes (\$21.99) The Bruno Colin wines were a huge hit from one of our email offerings this past month. Many of the offerings sold out, but there are a few wines left. This 2014 Chassagne-Montrachet rouge is an absolutely delicious Pinot Noir that will be appreciated by fans of “classic” red Burgundy. It shows wonderful, crunchy red cherry fruit, a bright, lively texture and hints of minerals and earth. This is a great food wine and a pleasure to drink.

2015 Domaine Laroche Chablis 1er Cru “Les Beauroys” (\$39.99) The Les Beauroys vineyard lies on the left bank of the Serein river in Chablis. It generally produces very charming wines. The 2015 from Laroche (a beautifully restored property that shares the same importer as DRC) is a wonderfully fresh, lively, mineral-driven wine that has a fair amount of acidity for the 2015 vintage. Being a Premier Cru, there is a fair amount of richness and complexity in the mid-palate. A perfect start to your fall dinners! **91 DC**

2015 Olivier Leflaive Bourgogne Blanc “Oncle Vincent” (\$21.99) The Oncle Vincent Cuvée pays homage to Vincent Leflaive, Olivier Leflaive’s uncle, who died in 1993. This wine is the richer, rounder offering of Leflaive’s two Bourgogne blancs, the other being the delicious Les Sétilles. The differences are even more apparent with the riper 2015 vintage. The Oncle Vincent has a rich, broad mouth-coating texture, which reveals flavors of golden apples, white peach and cream. The finish is long and juicy.



Fall in Love with the Wines of Jean-Michel Giboulot

By Lilia McIntosh

There has never been a better time to get into red Burgundy than now! Whether you are longtime collector, avid Burgundy drinker or just starting to discover the wine world, you cannot go wrong with 2015 vintage. From everywhere in Burgundy, the Pinot Noir is showing ripe fruit, structure and acidity in amazing balance. If you have been ambivalent in the past about the austerity of some red Burgundies, the wines of Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot are excellent examples of perfectly ripe, dark-fruited and complex Burgundy that will change your mind and make you fall in love with it.

Vigneron Jean-Michel Giboulot has 12 hectares in Savigny, Beaune and Pommard, and recently switched over to organic farming. He also practices 100% destemming and now uses more oak for the maturation period, which definitely reflects in the richer texture of his wines. Wines from Savigny-lès-Beaune especially are often overlooked, but they represent fantastic value and you can find stunning wines here for under \$40!

2015 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Savigny-lès-Beaune (\$29.99)

This is full of ripe Bing cherry aromas. The palate is richly textured and layered with spice, dark cherry and plum, firm tannins and bright acidity. It shows the ripeness of the vintage, yet stays restrained and well structured.

2015 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Cru

“Aux Gravains” (\$34.99) Bursting with aromas of strawberry and raspberry preserves, this silky and smooth wine glides across your palate. Fresh cherry, earthy notes and pronounced minerality create an incredibly complex flavor profile. The wine keeps changing over time in a decanter and opens up with more nuances: baking spice, floral notes and hints of cinnamon.

2015 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Hautes-Côtes de Beaune

(\$21.99) This shows more dark fruit: black cassis and dark Hudson cherry dominate the aromas and flavors. There are also notes of black tea on the palate, and the mouthfeel is dense and juicy. Everything seems to be in great balance: tannins, acidity and just a hint of oak come together seamlessly.

2015 Domaine Jean-Michel Giboulot Beaune

1er Cru “Clos du Roi” (\$39.99) This is probably the fullest in body of the Giboulot wines. It’s supple and very approachable, with soft tannins, black raspberry and black Tartarian cherry. But despite being rich, it doesn’t lack fresh, crunchy acidity and a good backbone of spice.



François Parent: Stepping up in Burgundy—Under Budget

By Sharon Kelly

Judging by the rate at which our savvy and thirsty customers have been clearing 2015 Burgundy wines from our shelves, there is plenty of flavor and value to enjoy from this stellar vintage. The fruit is much riper due to the hot and dry weather conditions, and the acidity is there to support the fruit without overwhelming it. If you’d like to step up your game and enjoy something above the basic Bourgogne rouge but have a wine spending budget that does not leave much room for stretching the limits, here are some viable choices with reasonable prices from François Parent that don’t need a good 10 years before they are ready to consume.

François comes from a long lineage of traditional winemakers. His father, Jacques Parent, was one of the first to bottle at the domaine instead of selling in bulk, and his mother traveled throughout Europe to market their wines—which is a common practice today among many smaller producers. François is also married to Anne-Françoise Gros of Domaine A.F. Gros, a distinguished vigneron in her own right. When they married they tied together their holdings in Vosne-Romanée, Pommard, Beaune and Corton and built a shared facility in Beaune. François is the winemaker for Domaine A.F. Gros and vinifies his own wines under the François Parent label.

2015 François Parent Hautes-Côtes de Nuits Bourgogne Rouge

(\$26.99) This wine has plenty of freshness right out of the bottle along with bright red cherry aromas and flavors that soften toward

the mid-palate. Easy to drink and even easier to enjoy, this is a great fit for Carneros Pinot Noir fans. A winning addition to any dinner party, it will pair well with warm, cheesy gougères or a succulent rotisserie chicken.

2015 François Parent Chambolle-Musigny (\$69.99) Of the four wines mentioned here, this immediately shows the most high-toned fruit and savory qualities on the palate. With the potential of 2–3 years in the cellar, it offers plenty of enjoyment now. Try with a mustard and tarragon-crusted pork roast and haricots verts.

2015 François Parent Vosne-Romanée (\$59.99)

My favorite of the lot right now, this one has a good concentration of red fruits, violets and a hint of fresh earth on the nose. This Vosne-Romanée is very satisfying on the palate, with silky smooth tannins and pleasantly vibrant acidity. There is a restrained presence of new oak toward the finish giving it a soft texture and a subtle lick of fruitiness.

2015 François Parent Gevrey-Chambertin

(\$59.99) More showy than the Vosne-Romanée and more weighty than the Chambolle-Musigny, this wine has generous black fruit, subtle spice and enough tannin and acid to make this a solid choice for short-term cellaring.



Chablis: Burgundy's Best Source for Value

By Alex Pross

Chablis offers value at all levels, from affordable entry-level offerings to Premier and Grand Cru offerings. We've been lucky enough to forge strong relationships with several producers. Here are two that represent, in my opinion, the very best values you can find in Chablis.

La Chablisienne

This cooperative accounts for up to 35% of the region's entire production, yet it has transcended the conventional co-op model and has become a reference-point producer for numerous Chablis vineyards. To still be able to offer several 2014 vintage Chablis from one of the greatest white Burgundy vintages ever is a treat, and there's great press from the critics for our 2013 and 2016 offerings, as well:

2013 La Chablisienne Chablis Grand Cru "Grenouilles" (\$69.99)
93 BH, 90 RP

2014 La Chablisienne Chablis Grand Cru "Preuses" (\$54.99)
96 DC, 94 BH, 94 WE, 92 RP

2014 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru "Vaulorent" (\$29.99)
92 BH, 92 WE, 91 RP

2014 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru "Vaillons" (\$24.99)
97 DC, 93 WE, 90 BH

2014 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru "Beuroy" (\$24.99)
93 DC, 90 RP



2016 La Chablisienne Bourgogne Chardonnay (\$13.99) Perfect for the customer who wants an everyday white that displays citrus notes along with mineral and saline qualities—and zero oak.

Domaine Louis Moreau

Husband-and-wife team Louis and Anne Moreau pretty much do it all here, from the moment the grapes hit the door of their winemaking facility. Louis got his degree in enology from Fresno State and worked for several California wineries before coming home to take over the winery from his father. We have a strong trio of wines from Louis Moreau.

A stellar value, the **2016 Domaine Louis Moreau Petite Chablis (\$16.99)** is loaded with bright citrus fruit notes, wet stone and hints of seashells. Another affordably priced offering, the **2016**

Domaine de Bieville (Louis Moreau) Chablis (\$16.99) is a stunning wine from 40-year-old vines—loads of citrus and stone fruit notes as well as a flinty character.

The **2014 Domaine Louis Moreau Chablis 1er Cru "Vaulignot" (\$24.99)** is a classically styled Chablis with oodles of melon and citrus fruit as well as iodine and wet stone notes. This structured white is a great example of the heights the 2014 vintage in Chablis reached. **91 WE, 90 BH** We have several more fantastic offerings from Louis Moreau—just hope they aren't sold out by the time you read this article!



Fall Favorites from Château de la Charrière

By Dulcinea Gonzalez

We are just getting into the season every San Franciscan looks forward to most. Indian summer brings with it a delicious harvest of fall flavors that are in perfect harmony with the wines of one of our favorite Direct Import producers, Château Charrière.

Themed with the pure fruit intensity, ample texture and approachability characteristic of 2015, these wines make an easy transition from summer to autumn and shine with excellent quality and value.

My favorite early fall pick is the refreshing **2015 Château de la Charrière Chassagne-Montrachet "Les Champs Morjot" (\$39.99)** that begins with a soothing aroma of vanilla and lemon curd and shows lively acidity and good structure. The texture is creamy with notes of both yellow apple and citrus. The finish is classic, rich and persistent. I can't imagine a better value Chassagne-Montrachet on the shelf. Highly recommended!

The **2015 Château de la Charrière Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune (\$18.99)** is fun and versatile. Talk about a Burgundy party wine in a bottle! This is a soft, easy-drinking, juicy expression, dominated by ripe red cherry aromas. Think cherry cola—refreshing, delicious and a total bargain!

On a more serious note, the **2015 Château de la Charrière Santenay 1er Cru "Gravieres" (\$29.99)** is a delicious Indian summer sipper that will segue nicely into the holidays. The nose here is vibrant and expressive, showing a bounty of ripe red fruit with layers of star anise and rose petals. Made from completely destemmed fruit, the Gravieres is a beautiful representation of Santenay, balanced with silky tannins and made to enjoy over an autumn dinner.

Finally, the brooding, earthy and dark-fruited **2015 Château de la Charrière Beaune 1er Cru "Clos des Vignes Franches" (\$34.99)**, with notes of black cherry and warm baking spices, is a well-built, rich and concentrated wine. Demonstrating plenty of dark, ripe, flavor-intense fruit on the mid-palate with super clean style, this is a great example of the vintage. While completely delicious now, this wine has supreme potential in the medium term, making it a rewarding pick-up for this autumn and even the next.





Center: Tasting with Catherine and Anne Parent. Right and left: photos courtesy Domaine Parent.

Domaine Parent: The Jewel of the Cote d'Or

By David Driscoll

Welcome to Burgundy's Côte d'Or: the most coveted, heralded, treasured and expensive series of vineyards on the planet, with an overwhelmingly complex network of owners who have been passing down their plots for generations. Exactly how these inheritances are divided is particularly interesting.

For those of you who are just getting your feet wet in the category, it started back in 1804 when Napoleon Bonaparte decreed that all assets and property left from a parent must be divided equally among the children, including vineyards in Burgundy. That means a father who owned one hectare of vines and had four children must legally divide that holding into four parts: one parcel for each child.

Imagine how that's worked out over the last two hundred years for these families! At this point there are brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins all in possession of a few vines here and a few more over there. Maybe two rows in this vineyard and another few rows in that one. In order to scale up and produce wine as a domaine these days, ambitious winemakers have to buy out the rest of their relatives, which has become a nightmare for smaller producers who don't have that kind of cash just sitting around. That's why you'll often see a number of domaines with the same last name, but various first names, like Anne Gros, Michel Gros, and Bernard Gros. It's also the reason you'll find Burgundy wine geeks out there who are so obsessed with the placement of these parcels that they've spent their entire lives mapping out who owns what, what lies where, and how "where" turns into greatness.

But that's not to say families don't stick together. One of my favorite Burgundy producers, Domaine Parent (not to be confused with François Parent, profiled on page 2), is run by a pair of sisters, Anne and Catherine, who have pooled their inherited plots and continued on

under the same family label. In Burgundy, the term "domaine" means the vines are owned by the producer, and Domaine Parent has holdings in Pommard, Beaune and Corton as well as a number of Chardonnay plots in Monthélie.

Visiting with the sisters this past spring, we tasted through the 2014 and 2015 vintages while Anne poured and walked us through the wines. I found her utterly charming and appreciated her ability to explain each expression with clarity and without ever sounding professorial. My colleague Alex asked Anne if she was relieved by how much better both harvests were than the difficult 2013, to which she answered: "I think 2013 is a fine year, but you can't ask a Toyota to be a Porsche. At the same time, a Toyota can be very useful. Serious winemakers know how to make good wine in any vintage." I couldn't help but respond by asking her: "Are you a serious winemaker, Anne?" She smiled and filled my glass a little higher. The answer to my question was right there in my hand.

The 2015 reds from Domaine Parent are utterly charming wines made with restraint and balance, with just the right concentration of fruit. A Bourgogne rouge is often a sign of a winemaker's chops, and the simple **2015 Domaine Parent Bourgogne Pinot Noir (\$29.99)** is full of dark, juicy fruit with gentle tannins and a clean, elegant finish. I asked Anne if she destemmed completely, as the fruit was so pure and easy to enjoy, but she said not entirely. "To use stems, however, you have to be sure about their health and maturity," adding on to the already stressful responsibility of managing the fruit.

My favorite, however, was the **2015 Domaine Parent Pommard 1er Cru "Les Argillieres" (\$79.99)**, a fleshy, deeply concentrated Pinot Noir with serious stuffing, built for the long haul. That wine was definitely a Porsche acting like a Porsche.

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