

WINE News

From Chablis to the Mâcon, Grand Cru to great values, we've been working hard to bring you the best in white Burgundy.



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The Good, the Blanc and the Aligoté: White Burgundy

By Keith Wollenberg

I have just returned from two weeks in Burgundy: 14 consecutive days of tasting hundreds and hundreds of wines. Then, before I could recover from my jet lag, I was asked to move this newsletter up from June to now. So here we go! I am energized and excited about the vintages of 2010, 2011 and 2012. All are smaller than average in harvest, but of great palate interest. Unfortunately, the lack of wine has put

increased pressure on prices for all of the top wines, and quantities are limited. Here at K&L, we look for those growers who are not yet famous as well as the lesser-known villages to find values for you, as well as continuing to carry all of the established names. This newsletter will focus on some of those white Burgundies from growers both famous and less well known. Don't miss the everyday values on Page 4.

White Burgundies Not to Miss



There are some compelling values in stock that I wanted to be certain to include in this newsletter. Here is a compendium of wines that are values for their quality, all of them favorites at my house. The **2011 Jacques Bavard Saint-Romain Blanc (\$29.99)*** is unmistakably terrific white Burgundy, but crisper and more refreshing than wines from lower-lying vineyards, with lovely minerality and drive. The **2011 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses "Les Clous" (\$31.99)*** is from just over the hill from Meursault. It's focused and bright, with lively minerality and just a hint of oak. The **2011 Jacques Bavard Meursault (\$41.99)*** is a compelling deal from this famous village. Deliciously rich and nutty, this Meursault shows very little oak. Finally, from Bavard we have the **2011**

Jacques Bavard Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru "Les Embrazées" (\$62.99)*, displaying a lovely nose of white flowers, a creamy middle, energy and drive on the finish and an attractive minerality.



From Roland Maroslavac in Puligny, we have two wines at special pricing. His wines are a bit tighter in structure, so we were delighted to find these with a year of additional bottle age. The **2010 Domaine Maroslavac-Leger Chassagne-Montrachet "Les Voillenots" (\$45.99)*** is the creamiest of the Maroslavac wines, with a thread of minerality that runs through it. The **2010 Domaine Maroslavac-Leger Puligny-Montrachet "Corvées des Vignes" (\$45.99)*** comes from 50- to 80-year-old vines planted in the Corvées des Vignes vineyard, which is located on the border with Meursault, catty-corner to Meursault-Charmes 1er Cru. Because of the vine age the wines from here tend to show incredible old vine intensity, focus and minerality that belies their village wine status.



The Spectacular Wines of Benoit Ente

Benoit Ente has been making wine for 25 years and is acknowledged as a master by those in the know. While his brother Arnauld Ente may have achieved greater fame thus far, I learn more about Burgundy every time I visit Benoit. His knowledge of the vineyards is detailed, and his attention to that detail in both the vines and the cellar results in well-crafted wines with drive and richness. We get tiny quantities of his wines, so act quickly. Allen Meadows, “Burghound” writes: “As the scores and commentaries suggest, the Ente 2011s are lovely wines and worth your attention.” I mentioned his delightful **2011 Domaine Benoit Ente Bourgogne Aligoté (\$24.99)** elsewhere in this issue. Do not miss his **2011 Domaine Benoit Ente Chassagne-Montrachet “Les Houillères” (\$69.99)** from a lower-lying vineyard on the border with Puligny-Montrachet, where Benoit has planted grass to limit vigor. As Burghound says, “A pungent nose of resin, green tea and pear introduces rich, round and easy-to-like medium weight flavors that possess



good verve and detail on the solidly complex and persistent finish.” The **2011 Domaine Benoit Ente Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru “Champ Gain” (\$114.99)** is amazing. I’ll let Burghound speak again: “Outstanding: This is also quite expressive with its mix of white orchard fruit, rose petal and hints of citrus zest. There is a highly attractive texture to the seductive medium weight flavors that possess excellent punch on the mineral-infused, impressively complex and persistent citrusy finish.” We also have a few bottles of the **2011 Domaine Benoit Ente Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru “Folatières-En la Richarde” (\$154.99)** from a tiny parcel above Caillerets, just a stone’s throw from Chevalier Montrachet Grand Cru. Quoting Burghound one last time: “Sweet Spot Outstanding! A strikingly layered nose offers up airy notes of dried apricot, apple, acacia blossom and citrus nuances...and plenty of minerality to the ripe, punchy and fleshy medium-bodied flavors that display plenty of citrus influence on the bone dry but not especially austere finish. This sneaky long effort is impeccably well-balanced and really quite stylish.”

ALIGOTÉ *The Other White Grape of Burgundy*



Many people think of white Burgundy as being purely Chardonnay-based. While Chardonnay may be the most famous white varietal in Burgundy, there is another: Aligoté. Recorded in Burgundy in the 1700s, Aligoté was once widely planted, but almost died out in the early 20th century after the 19th century phylloxera epidemic wiped out most of the vineyards. It is undergoing a renaissance in the 21st century, however; Aubert DeVillaine, proprietor of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti believes so fervently in this grape that he fought for—and won—an all-Aligoté appellation in Bouzeron.

Aligoté is a high-acid grape, so ripeness is important for balance. My friends in Burgundy always serve a glass of Aligoté to start the evening and whet the palate, and it has become one of my favorite summer whites. For a brighter style, the **2011 Domaine Anne & Arnaud Goisot**

Bourgogne Aligoté Vieilles Vignes (\$11.99)* is open and appealing on the palate, with spice and freshness. It comes from Saint-Bris-les-Vineux, a tiny village west of Chablis. From further south, in the tiny Côte de Nuits village of Corgoloin, we find the **2011 Domaine Desertaux-Ferrand Bourgogne Aligoté (\$12.99)***. This is a crisp but focused white, aged in both tank and barrel, which the winery describes as “ideal to accompany dishes of seafood, a plate of charcuterie or a salad composée.” Continuing south to the heart of the Côte de Beaune, we come to the storied villages of Chassagne-Montrachet and Puligny-Montrachet. The **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Bourgogne Aligoté (\$15.99)*** is aged on the lees for 12 months, both in tank and barrel, for a rich, leesy mid-palate. Finally, the **2011 Domaine Benoit Ente Bourgogne Aligoté (\$24.99)** is barrel fermented in small 235-liter barrels and aged on the lees for 18 months, adding weight and richness. Burghound writes: “A spicy and very fresh nose of citrus and white floral tones leads to racy, intense and well-detailed flavors that exude a fine minerality on the balanced, refreshing and utterly delicious finish.” Try one or more of these delicious Aligotés and see why this is such a favorite at my house!

CORTON AND MONTRACHET *The Grandest of the Grand*

Sometimes, scrimping and saving is not the thing to do. Sometimes you just have to go *big*—“Grand,” even. I’m talking about Grand Cru white Burgundy, the best of the best, and we have some amazing choices to offer. Of course, since some of these are made in tiny quantities, the supplies are extremely limited.

Planted with vines by the Emperor Charlemagne, who noticed that the snow melts first on this south-facing hillside, the hill of

Corton has been a renowned winegrowing area for centuries. We have a number of terrific Corton-Charlemagne Grands Cru. The **2011 Domaine Marius Delarache Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$89.99)*** is an astounding value for this concentrated Grand Cru from 50-year-old vines, thanks to our direct purchase from the grower. The **2011 Domaine Bonneau du Martray Corton**

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Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$139.99) (Previously \$155) is from the most renowned grower on the hill, and has notes of mandarin and minerality. Superb at any price and a bargain at this one! The **2011 Domaine Louis Jadot (Heritiers) Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$149.99)** has prominent lavender and pineapple notes and amazing richness (from the Aloxe-Corton side of the hill). 92 points WS: “The flavors of apple, lemon and spice seem straightforward, but this white sneaks up on you, building in intensity to a long finish. The oak is discreet, showing a balanced mix of fruit and spice notes in the aftertaste.”

The **2011 Domaine Bouchard Père et Fils Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$159.99)** has less than 10% new oak and fine concentration, with notes of citrus and wet stone. 94 points ST: “Juicy and penetrating yet at the same time silky and thick, communicating outstanding tension to its steely mineral-driven flavors. Wonderfully dense yet light on its feet, this vibrant, gripping wine is a classic example of its vineyard.”

We have an incredible selection from Montrachet. The **2011 Domaine Paul Pernot Bienvenues Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru (\$179.95)*** is a wine of great charm, with lovely white stone fruits and very focused citrus notes. The **2011 Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru (\$399)** is extremely rare and both floral and focused in character. 94-96 points Antonio Galloni: “Exotic white flowers, ginger, white pepper and lychee... a wine that dazzles from start to finish. The 2011 is pure seduction.” Finally, as rare as hen’s teeth, the **2011 Domaine Marquis de Laguiche (Joseph Drouhin) Montrachet Grand Cru (\$800)** has garnered rave reviews, and 94 points WA: “...vivid scents of almond, blood orange, vanilla and lemon sorbet that leap from the glass and gain intensity with each swirl.”

Purely Pillot, Purely Chassagne-Montrachet

Thierry Pillot is an up-and-coming grower in Chassagne-Montrachet. The son of Paul Pillot, Thierry is now working with his sister, Crystal, and is in charge of the vineyards and cellar at Domaine Paul Pillot. I have tasted at this domaine for more than 12 years and the trend in quality has been upward, to higher and higher levels. He is now among the very top echelon of white wine makers in the Cote d’Or, and a candidate to be among the stars, in my opinion. Our relationships in France allow us to bring you his wines at compelling pricing for the quality. As his popularity increases, the quantity we are able to get seems to decrease, so do not miss out on these terrifically pure and focused wines from Chassagne-Montrachet. This year they have a new and beautifully clean label, reflecting the purity and focus they look for in their wines.

The **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Bourgogne Aligoté (\$15.99)*** is made from the ancient white grape of Burgundy, aged in tank and in barrel, with no lees stirring, and is crisp and delightful with a rich finish. His **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Bourgogne Chardonnay (\$21.99)*** is hand-harvested from estate vineyards in Chassagne and fermented with wild yeast.



Crisp and bright, this has energy and drive. One of my favorites is from a vineyard just outside the limits of Chassagne, and much cheaper since it does not say “Montrachet” on the label. It is the **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Saint-Aubin 1er Cru “Charmois” (\$37.95)***.



Thierry Pillot readies a shipment of wine.

The **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Chassagne-Montrachet (\$49.95)*** has pure and focused flavors that are both complex and well-balanced. Burghound calls it an “Outstanding Top Value” wine. The **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru “Clos St. Jean” (\$59.95)*** is from a beautiful little walled vineyard, high on the hill, just a few yards north of Thierry’s cuverie and across the road from his parents’ house. Lovingly tended, this is always a favorite, with its floral nose accented by hints of white flowers and peaches, and a delicate minerality on the palate. The **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru “Grande Montagne” (\$64.99)*** always seems to be near Grand Cru in quality at this domaine. The 2011 displays restrained tropical fruit notes, lots of mid-palate power, and great length on the finish. Another wine that merits an “Outstanding” from Burghound is the **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru “Les Caillerets” (\$69.95)***. Here the mid-palate is mineral-infused and attractive lemon blossom notes show on the nose.

In addition to his whites, Thierry makes lovely, pure, focused reds. We have two. The ripe, expressive, and delicious **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Bourgogne Pinot Noir (\$19.99)*** earned an “Outstanding” from Burghound. Finally, we have a bit of the **2011 Domaine Paul Pillot Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge “Vieilles Vignes” (\$34.99)*** which is ripe and compelling on the nose, with supple tannins and elegance. Yet another wine that rates “Outstanding” from Burghound.

The Many Values in White Burgundy



As Burgundy prices continue to increase because of a variety of factors, including four consecutive smaller-than-normal vintages, increased interest in Burgundy from China, and the weakness of the U.S. dollar versus the Euro, one bright spot remains. There is more good, well-made and affordable Burgundy being produced today than ever before. This may seem counterintuitive if you are only focusing on the prices of the very top wines. However, if you look at the unknown growers, the lesser-known villages, and the AOC Bourgogne, as we do, there are many great values to be found. One of our finds comes from a small grower in the Mâcon, Lionel Marin. He is a fourth generation wine grower, but the first to make a full-time living at it, after attending the College of Viticulture in Davayé. He farms several hectares, but sells all the fruit except that from 50-year-old vines which he vinifies himself to



Chardonnay soaking up the sun in Chablis.

the delicious **2011 Domaine des Niales Rhedon-Marin Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes (\$12.99)***. From the Mâcon in the south, we skip to Chablis in the north. Just an hour and a half south of Paris, Chablis is a cool-climate growing region where most of the wines are made with no oak. We have two refreshing values from Château Maligny. The **2012 Château de Maligny Petit Chablis (\$15.99)*** has a saline and focused mid-palate, making this more like a Chablis than a Petit Chablis, which is a good thing. For a very modest price, you get estate-grown, unoaked Chardonnay that matches beautifully with shellfish of all sorts. Their **2012 Château de Maligny Chablis**

There is more good, well-made and affordable Burgundy being produced today than ever before. Look at the unknown growers, the lesser-known villages, and the AOC Bourgogne to find values—we do.

(\$19.99)* is concentrated and mineral-driven, with a rich mid-palate—classic Chablis made entirely from estate-grown fruit with vines of 25-35 years of age.

If you are looking for richer Chardonnay, the famous villages of Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet are the best places to look. But look to the domaines' regional level Bourgogne for values. If the famous name of the village is not on the bottle it sells for much less. From Meursault, we have the **2011 Thierry & Pascale Matrot Bourgogne Blanc (\$17.99)**, which Robert Parker calls “a killer wine from just outside the appellation of Meursault ... a sensational generic white Burgundy to consume over the next several years.” Moving south to Puligny-Montrachet, we have the **2011 Domaine Paul Pernot Bourgogne Chardonnay (\$21.99)***, displaying lots of Puligny charm in the form of nice richness, palate weight and drive, accompanied by attractive lemon notes. Continuing south, we come to the village of Chassagne-Montrachet, where we find another Thierry: Thierry Pillot, son of Paul Pillot. His **2012 Domaine Paul Pillot Bourgogne Chardonnay (\$21.99)***. understated and elegant, this estate-grown, hand-harvested white is fermented with wild yeasts and is always a favorite among our staff and customers. Why not try all three?

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