

THEATRE OF WINE.

Burgundy 2010



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Burgundy 2010 Vintage Report

If 2008 was a classically high-toned and light-bodied vintage that appealed to devotees of Burgundy, and 2009 a ripe, fruit-forward vintage that showed these wines at their most accessible, then 2010 brings the best of both vintages together in a classic mould.

It is, however, a rather variable vintage. The best reds combine a rich texture, good depth of fruit and fine tannins and structure, and excellent levels of mineral acidity in the best whites. The less successful are over-oaked, green or astringent among the reds, or blisteringly acidic among the whites.

After extensive tasting we have limited our offer to those producers who got it right but who have broadly prioritised elegance over extract, including those such as Jean-Marc Bouley and Alexandrine Roy who, although not in the starry firmament of Burgundy producers with a Grand Cru, are making wines with passion that represent exceptional value for money.

Cold weather at the end of December 2009 killed off many vines but ultimately resulted in wines with plenty of concentration thanks to low yields. The introduction of sorting tables in the top domaines and meticulous care and attention to detail in smaller ones has revealed wines of equal parts finesse and power which will repay long ageing thanks to good levels of acidity and tannin. The downside is that quantities are extremely limited so we cannot guarantee availability.

If you are interested in acquiring these wines, please contact your nearest shop using the contact details below and we will be happy to advise. All prices are per bottle at a discounted en primeur rate and include duty and VAT. The wines will be shipped later in the year, or at the latest spring 2013.

Additionally we have a small number of 2008 and 2009 vintage wines available for sale from Fourrier, Mugnier, Rossignol-Trapet and Berthau.

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Domaine Jean-Marc Bouley

The talented Thomas Bouley has taken over the reigns from his father Jean-Marc, having joined the domaine in 2002 after vintages in Oregon and with Felton Road in New Zealand.

We agree completely with Jancis that Thomas is one of the new rising stars of Burgundy; the wines are superb expressions of Volnay in a modern mould. Thomas isn't afraid to use whole bunches and 50-70% new oak on his wines, but always in response to the vintage. His Volnay 'Clos de la Cave' uses 40% whole bunches (10% up on last year), 30% new oak and comes from a south east facing plot of 30 year old vines. It shows terrific texture, depth and substance without being overwrought in any way. Savoury rather than sweet, this is serious wine.

The Volnay 1er Cru Clos des Chênes is from two plots of old vines, between 45 and 55 years old, and also uses 40% whole bunches but the extra richness from the older vines warrants 50% new oak. Although in a similar mould to the Clos de la Cave, this has a bigger nose, lots of power, freshness and herbal underpinnings. We have no doubt this will be good for another twenty years.

Volnay 'Clos de la Cave'	£36.50
Volnay 1er Cru Clos des Chênes	£55.00

Domaine Sylvaine Pataille

We've long been fans of Sylvain's terroir-driven Marsannays for their personality and diversity, and if you haven't tried them you are missing out. A trained oenologist, Sylvain and his brother Laurent have produced another sensational vintage in 2010, marked by more power and structure than the lighter, fresher 2008s we offered previously.

Of all the cuvees we've selected our favourites are the Marsannay 'La Montagne' and the astonishing Bourgogne Rouge 'Le Chapitre'. All of Sylvain's wines are 100% whole bunch fermented, which gives them attractive tannins and a more positive structure than other producers in the region.

The Marsannay 'La Montagne' has a beautifully lifted raspberry and cherry nose, abundant freshness, tight, sleek tannins and teasing minerality. It's just a joy to drink. The 'Le Chapitre' bottling comes from the eponymous vineyard that wasn't officially classified (hence the Bourgogne Rouge appellation) but, Sylvain told me, it is potentially the greatest in Marsannay. In 2008 Sylvain acquired a miniscule 0.85 hectares of the 8 hectare site. His yields for 2008 were 5 hectolitres per hectare, 15hl in 2009 and 20hl in 2010. The tiny yields really show for this has astonishing concentration, creamy red-fruited richness and structural profundity. And it is seriously good value.

Marsannay 'La Montagne'	£26.10
Bourgogne Rouge 'Le Chapitre'	£26.10

Domaine Marc Roy

In our opinion, there are few finer winemakers in Burgundy than Alexandrine Roy. The fact that the domaine holds no premier or grand cru vineyards should not put you off because Alexandrine nonetheless manages to find and express the essence of Gevrey.

We're offering the 2010 of an old favourite, the white Marsannay 'Le Champ Perdrix'. This is from vines grown on a steep, stony slope that delivers lots of mineral acidity combined with a taut, green-apple freshness and notes of pastry, pears and peaches. Complex and rewarding, this doesn't go through the typical malolactic fermentation, rendering it livelier, tighter and firmer than many Chardonnay-based whites in the region. The second is the sensational Gevrey-Chambertin Clos Prieur which wears its 50% new oak very lightly thanks to fruit from 55 year old vines that sit on the same line as grand crus Charmes and Chapelle but are classified as village level vines. The nose is totally winning – flowers, cherries, and then silky strawberry fruit on the palate, supported by fine, integrated tannins. These are seductive but serious wines that can be enjoyed relatively early.

Marsannay 'Le Champ Perdrix'	£25.30
Gevrey-Chambertin Clos Prieur	£45.20

Domaine Pierre Damoy

The Damoy wines speak for themselves and although they're worth the money, they aren't exactly giving them away either! We believe that there are ongoing pricing discussions within the family, with Pierre keen to maintain more reasonable prices and others arguing for greater profit. This is a great vintage for Damoy, and worth investing in for the long term since prices here are only going up.

We're offering the Gevrey-Chambertin Clos Tamisot because we think it is both excellent and very classic. The nose is brisk, assertive and taut with a sweet strawberry palate, fine tannins and lovely mineral acidity all through the palate. Delicious, but for the cellar.

Domaine Pierre Damoy Gevrey-Chambertin Clos Tamisot	£64.30
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Domaine Francois Berthau

Francois Berthau's style always leans towards aromatic elegance rather than power, and his Chambolle-Musignys are sensuous and beguiling year after year. Francois practices total destemming and ethereal delicacy is the hallmark of this domaine's style. Only 20-30% of new oak is used.

The village Chambolle-Musigny is exotic and transporting, with delicate wild strawberry aromas and a lovely kirsch cherry midpalate. Soft, yes, but structured. The Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru shows, as you'd expect, more zesty and sappy fruit that's less immediately open and appealing but clearly built for the long haul structurally. As for the Amoureuuses, it's as sultry as you like –

you might even say a little pouty at this stage, but there's such delicious complexity here – asian spices, soy, and a hint of blackcurrant fruit.

Chambolle-Musigny	£36.40
Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru	£58.00
Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru Amoureuses	£115.60

Domaine Confuron-Gindre

One of many Confurons in the village, we're very keen on Confuron-Gindre's full, fine fruited, and – dare we say it – very honestly priced burgundies. The domaine consists of 11 hectares spread over fifty parcels. All the wines are unfiltered and unfinned, and are available in small quantities.

The standout for us was the Vosne-Romanee 1er Cru Les Beaux Monts which is lifted, aromatic and juicy on the nose (it draws you in rather guilelessly) swiftly followed by a charged, linear, grippy palate full of mineral happiness. Tantalising and complete wine.

Vosne-Romanee 1er Cru Les Beaux Monts	£50.80
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Domaine Fourrier

The Fourrier wines are absolutely sensational in 2010 but the crop was tiny. The wines display a trademark meatiness that is intensely savoury and umami, and seem destined to age extremely well. Jean-Marie uses a minimal amount of sulphur – the philosophy is based on adding a little as possible at bottling and cutting it out entirely during fermentation – and believes in observation and husbandry more than science and oenology.

We have already sold our allocations of the top wines before this offer even made it into the light of day, but we have some remaining bottles of the Gevrey Chambertin villages which is meaty on the nose, with rich beef stock character, then gorgeous sweet fruit on the palate run through with spice, game notes, fennel and earth. This is powerful and transfixing.

Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes	£36.70
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