

JANUARY 2015

# 2013 BURGUNDY

*'A Thoroughly British Vintage'*

Possibly the most tedious question a vigneron is asked during the weeks spent tasting every Autumn is what vintage they would compare the current wines to, and this year was no exception. For 2013 there was really no definitive answer, and I listened with interest as various growers mulled over the question, without ever coming to a conclusion. The most enjoyable of these discussions was at Domaine Lafarge in Volnay, where Frédéric and his 86 year-old father Michel had an enthusiastic discussion which ended with no clear answer despite going back well beyond my birth year. After some time they abandoned the exercise and opened a 1980 Clos des Chênes, at which point we decided we no longer really cared. For my money, it is along the lines of 2008 but with greater padding; a mini-2010, if you like. There is a lovely delineation between the quality levels and a real definition and individuality to each terroir. Whereas 2012 charmed everyone's socks off with its rich and seductive fruit character, 2013 is one for the genuine enthusiast. It is nuanced, refined, elegant and with great energy. A small but perfectly-formed and thoroughly British vintage for Burgundy lovers, although perhaps not one which will find much favour across the pond (but that's their loss).

Despite the pleasing results, things did not get off to a particularly auspicious start as flowering was delayed and uneven due to a cool, wet and often windy spring, with the weather not improving until the end of June. Coulure and Millerandage were the order of the day, reducing the potential crop from the very beginning. By the end of the month however, summer had arrived and the weather remained generally fine through July and August. However, life in the Côte de Beaune is not so simple these days and the growers of Volnay, Pommard and Beaune could be forgiven for thinking they had run over a whole clowder of black cats when on the 23rd of July a ferocious hailstorm swept northwards from Meursault to the hill of Corton, stripping the vines of leaves and fruit. The worst-hit areas were Pernand-Vergelesses, Savigny-lès-Beaune, Beaune itself, Pommard, Volnay and Meursault. In these areas it was not uncommon for zero harvest to be made from many parcels. September was cool and the threat of rot loomed large. Uncommonly in recent terms, the grapes did not approach ripeness until towards the end of the month and a waiting game ensued as vignerons wrestled with the dilemma of whether to harvest at lower ripeness or run the risk of rot. The truth, as ever, is that it was a more complicated question than that, with no simple answer, although the following are generally accepted as the key points when determining the best time to pick:

- In the Côte de Beaune, whites were best if picked before or immediately after the electrical storm which arrived on the weekend of the 5th and 6th October. This meteorological event caused the white grapes' skins to turn brown, with the resultant wines lacking freshness and vibrancy. The reds,



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however, seemed to be unaffected by the storm, with the best being picked after rather than before, the extra hang time allowing the tartaric acidity to fall slightly.

- In the Côte de Nuits the storm did not seem to be a factor and generally the first and second weeks of October appear to have been the best time to pick for balanced wines.

After a tricky time in the vines, this was not the most straightforward vintage once the grapes arrived. The vibrating sorting tables everyone seems to have invested in came into their own, allowing any rotten and hail-damaged berries to be separated from the healthy ones. Of the growers hit by the hail, the most successful were those who exercised a lighter touch, toning down extraction and reducing the number of pigeages and the percentage of new oak barrels. With natural sugar levels around 11 or 12 degrees, it was necessary to chaptalise by anything up to one degree in order to obtain balance. This was done carefully and the profile of the wines is not adversely affected as a result. There were numerous reports of delayed malos and some barrels were consequently not ready to taste in November.

I am pleased to report that we work with some extraordinarily talented growers and winemakers who have, on the whole, produced a very enjoyable range of wines despite the difficult circumstances. There were a number of highlights for me this year:

- Laurent Fournier's Marsannays continue to break new ground in this rapidly-improving appellation.
- Christophe Drag at Domaine Jean Chauvenet showed that the lighter style he has adopted since the 2009 vintage is really paying dividends with a range of elegant and characterful Nuits-St-Georges.
- My excitement at tasting in the less fashionable northern extreme of the Côte de Nuits has seen us introduce an excellent Fixin and two distinctive Marsannays from Domaine Bart; certainly worth a good look.
- In the Côte de Beaune we seem to have unearthed a gem in the form of young Sébastien Magnien, whose wines took another big step forward this year; my advice is to get in early.
- Jean-Baptiste Bouzereau's progress since moving cellars in 2009 continues as he showed an impressive range of focused and crystalline Meursaults once again.
- Domaine Cherisey-Martelet, based high up in Blagny and producing some very exciting wines from top terroir.

In further good news, most growers have held their pricing and some have even gone down. With a slightly improved exchange rate this means that in most cases we are offering the 2013 vintage at a lower price than the 2012.

**Adam Bruntlett**

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**Please note this report does not contain tasting notes. However, they are available upon request.**

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## COTE DE NUITS

### **Domaine Jean Fournier, Marsannay**

This is the second year that Domaine Fournier has appeared in our Burgundy offering. I know it is rather a broken record, but I honestly think that Marsannay has a very bright future. Unfortunately the application for 1er Cru status is dragging on thanks to somewhat predictable French bureaucracy. Fittingly for our most northern Côte d'Or grower, this was my first tasting of the trip, and any doubts I may have had about the quality of the vintage were soon allayed as I was treated to a mammoth tasting of Laurent's twenty cuvées. As last year, we have refined our offering to the wines we feel offer the best quality.

Yields were very low, particularly in the future premier crus which were the victims of poor flowering, mildew and sunburn. Despite these difficulties Laurent explained that the cleanliness of the grapes on arrival in the cellar meant that in many cases he was able to use no sulphur at the beginning of fermentation. Harvest took place between the 4th and 13th October.

Marsannay Blanc, Clos du Roy	12x75cl
Marsannay Rouge, Clos du Roy	12x75cl
Marsannay Rouge, Les Es Chezots	12x75cl

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### **Domaine Bart, Marsannay – NEW**

A new name for the FMV Burgundy lineup, Domaine Bart is based in Marsannay and its 22ha of vines are currently managed by Pierre Bart and his uncle Martin who took over the running of the domaine in 1988. Although Pierre initially struggled to remember, he eventually decided that they have vines in nine different climats in Marsannay, all of which are bottled individually, enabling an interesting comparison of the terroirs of the appellation. We have selected two that we feel are the most interesting, along with an incredible old vine 1er Cru Fixin. Of the Marsannays the Saint Jacques is a duopoly in the south of the appellation, from vines planted 21 years ago. One of the hardest parcels to work due to a combination of its proximity to the forest and the Pinot's thin skins, and therefore the grapes' propensity to 'turn' quickly from ripe to rotten, it is pure, seductive and moreish. Three quarters of the Grandes Vignes vines were planted fifty years ago, with the remainder ageing a quarter of a century. Prone to millerandage, the yields have dropped significantly in the last eight to ten years, with the resulting wine showing full and rounded fruit and incredible length. The Fixin comes from Les Hervelets and is undeniably the best example I have ever tasted. They work one and a half hectares of vines in three millerandage-prone parcels, producing a wine of extraordinary richness, focus and purity.

Pierre is very happy with the 2013 vintage, explaining that he feels there is good concentration and refreshing acidity. Their vinification methods are very traditional, with most wines destemmed before cool maceration for a week until the temperature rises naturally and fermentation begins (all with natural yeasts). Pigeage and pumping over are carried out but adjusted depending on the vintage. There is around 15 to 20% whole bunch fermentation on the top Marsannays and new oak is kept at a maximum of 25% on both the Marsannays and Fixins. The house style is to focus on obtaining good balance between expression of fruit, acidity and tannin, and to avoid over extraction.

Marsannay Rouge, Les Grandes Vignes	12x75cl
Marsannay Rouge, Les Saint Jacques	12x75cl
Fixin 1er Cru, Les Hervelets	6x75cl

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### **Domaine René Leclerc, Gevrey–Chambertin – NEW**

A new name for the FMV IBD Offer, Domaine Leclerc is an historic domaine which has recently seen a change of generation, with François taking the reins from his father on the winemaking front. Situated on the Route Nationale in Gevrey, they have vines in several of the best vineyards in the appellation, including Clos Prieur (70 year old vines), Champeaux, Combe Aux Moines, Lavaux–Saint–Jacques and Griotte–Chambertin.

François makes wines to age, and the cellars are packed with stacks of old vintages. New oak percentages are relatively low at around 20 to 25%, and the winemaking style is traditional, 100% destemmed.

Harvest began on the 3rd October, and François feels that this is a successful vintage for the domaine, with each wine expressing its identity and terroir.

Gevrey–Chambertin, Clos Prieur	6x75cl
Gevrey–Chambertin 1er Cru, Combe Aux Moines	6x75cl
Gevrey–Chabertin 1er Cru, Champeaux	6x75cl
Gevrey–Chambertin 1er Cru, Lavaux–Saint–Jacques	6x75cl
Griotte–Chambertin, Grand Cru	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Digioia–Royer, Chambolle–Musigny – NEW**

Run by Michel Digioia, this is a little–known and relatively young estate which punches well above its weight and offers great value Chambolle. We have not offered their wines in the IBD Offer before but the quality is now such that the Premières merits its inclusion. From 80 to 85 year old vines, this is a village wine which offers premier cru quality.

Chambolle–Musigny Vieilles Vignes, Les Fremières	12x75cl
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### **Domaine Jean Grivot, Vosne–Romanée**

A domaine which needs no introduction, we are once again able to offer Grivot’s excellent Coteaux Bourguignons, made from old vine Gamay planted east of the railway line in Flagey–Echezeaux and made in the Burgundian style with pigeage and a proportion of new oak. Etienne assures me that it ages very well, explaining that when he was studying in Beaune he took an old bottle to a blind tasting with his fellow students, most of whom had it pegged as a Grand Cru from a particularly fine vintage.

2013 is a stellar vintage here, and tasting was a real pleasure from start to finish. Etienne explained that he had never before seen grapes have ripe pips so early in the season, and at just 9.5°. This allowed the vine to then focus its energy on ripening the skins, giving ripe grapes at relatively low sugar levels (around 11.5 to 12°). Harvest began here on the 5th October, and the wines were described by Etienne as ‘seductive with very high quality acidity and good potential for keeping’.

Coteaux Bourguignons	12x75cl
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### **Domaine Jean Chauvenet, Nuits–Saint–Georges**

The season started badly with wet weather meaning flowering was three weeks later than usual, on the 25th June. It was so wet, in fact, that ducks decided to take up home in the flooded vineyards and began eating the vegetation. Rain also fell during harvest, with a severe selection taking place in the vines to eliminate any rotten grapes. But 2013 was a vintage when the hard work Christophe has put into developing a gentler and more careful vinification process paid off. Since 2009 he has changed the way he handles the grapes, looking after the skins by eliminating the pump in favour of an elevator, carrying out the whole process by gravity and also completely removing pigeage in favour of gently submerging the cap in the juice. As a result the wines are finer and less-extracted than a decade ago.

Nuits–Saint–Georges, Les Lavières	12x75cl
Nuits–Saint–Georges 1er Cru, Aux Argillas	12x75cl
Nuits–Saint–Georges 1er Cru, Les Poulettes	12x75cl
Nuits–Saint–Georges 1er Cru, Les Vaucrains	12x75cl

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### **Domaine Michèle et Patrice Rion, Prémieux–Puissey**

Volumes are up slightly on 2012, but still below the level of 2011. The vines in Chambolle–Musigny are younger so have produced a little more, whereas the older Nuits vines have yielded a smaller crop. Patrice feels 2013 is similar to 2007 but with more weight.

Nuits–Saint–Georges 1er Cru Blanc, Les Terres Blanches	6x75cl
Bourgogne Rouge, Les Bons Batons	12x75cl
Nuits–Saint–Georges, Vieilles Vignes	12x75cl
Nuits–Saint–Georges 1er Cru, Clos des Argillières	6x75cl
Chambolle–Musigny, Les Cras	12x75cl
Chambolle–Musigny 1er Cru, Les Charmes	6x75cl

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## **COTE DE BEAUNE**

### **Domaine Sylvain Loichet, Chorey–lès–Beaune**

The 2013 wines are really very good here, with the usual ripe and almost exotic notes being matched with a lovely tension. Sylvain began harvesting on the 30th September and he took the decision to shorten the élevage of the wines this year in order to preserve a greater sense of freshness and avoid creating wines which are too fat.

Pernand–Vergelesses, Les Belles Filles	12x75cl
Ladoix, Bois de Grechons	12x75cl
Ladoix 1er Cru, Les Grechons	12x75cl
Corton–Charlemagne	6x75cl

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## Domaine Camus-Bruchon, Savigny-lès-Beaune

2013 was of course a very difficult vintage for the growers of Savigny-lès-Beaune, but Guillaume was perhaps one of the most successful amongst them in terms of the way he reacted to the difficult conditions and adapted his winemaking style. The wines were vinified very carefully, with gentle extraction and minimal oak influence, in order to keep the wines light, delicate and fresh. The result is a range of gorgeous, pretty wines which stand in stark contrast to those who took the opposite approach and smothered the wines with added sugar and new oak. The sign of a great winemaker is one who can adapt to difficult situations and there is no doubt whatsoever that Guillaume has done just that, making some excellent wines under challenging conditions.

Bourgogne Pinot Noir	12x75cl
Chorey-lès-Beaune	12x75cl
Savigny-lès-Beaune	12x75cl
Savigny-lès-Beaune 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru, Les Gravains	12x75cl

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## Benjamin Leroux, Beaune

A négoce which continues from strength to strength under the guidance of this very talented young winemaker, it is certain that the rise will only continue now that Benjamin has relinquished his post at Comte Armand in Pommard and can dedicate 100% of his time and energy to his personal project.

Harvest began with Batard Montrachet on the 28th September, with the whites all picked by the following Thursday, meaning that everything came in before the rains; a relief for Ben as he explained how those who waited too long had serious difficulties, with rotten grapes at an unripe 9.5°. As a consequence all of the white wines here have a delightful freshness and vibrancy, and the reds, which were picked later and were unaffected by the rain, have good ripeness of fruit to accompany the vintage's hallmark freshness.

Auxey-Duresses Blanc	6x75cl
Saint-Romain Blanc, Sous le Château	6x75cl
Meursault	6x75cl
Meursault, Les Vireuils	6x75cl
Puligny-Montrachet 1 <sup>er</sup> Cru, Champ Gain	6x75cl
Gevrey-Chambertin	6x75cl
Gevrey-Chambertin, Aux Etelois	6x75cl
Nuits-Saint-Georges, Aux Allots	6x75cl
Vosne-Romanée	6x75cl

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### **Domaine François Buffet, Volnay**

Marc Olivier explained how he had to adapt his methods in 2013 as a result of the hail which held back maturity; principally he carried out a shorter 15-day cuvaison so as to reduce the level of extraction and avoid extracting unripe tannins. So conscious was he of the need to handle the grapes with care that he resorted to moving them in buckets rather than using the pump, so as not to break the skins. It must have been hard work, because he invested in an elevator for the 2014s! In addition, because he felt that many of the stems were not ripe he decided to reduce the percentage of whole bunch to just 10 or 15% and only on the Taillepieds and Rugiens. The precautions taken have really paid dividends, resulting in a range of very fine, elegant wines with silky tannins.

Volnay	6x75cl
Volnay 1er Cru, Les Champans	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Michel Bouzereau et Fils, Meursault**

One of the most improved domaines over the last five years, the move to new purpose-built cellars has allowed Jean-Baptiste's wines to really take a leap forward in quality and focus. The wines are consistently of very high quality, classic Meursaults but with the nervosity and finesse of great Puligny-Montrachets. Yields were low once again, principally due to the poor conditions at flowering, although the already small potential crop was reduced further when 80% of the vines were hit by hail. Jean-Baptiste feels the wines do not have a particular vintage signature, but rather that it is a year where the wines are allowed to really express their terroir. 'On est proche des terroirs' was his summary.

Bourgogne Chardonnay	12x75cl
Meursault, Les Grands Charrons	12x75cl
Meursault, Limozin	12x75cl
Meursault, Les Tessons	12x75cl
Meursault 1er Cru, Genevrières	6x75cl
Meursault 1er Cru, Perrières	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Coche-Bizouard, Meursault**

Roy Richards started working with Alain Coche with the 1978 vintage, and along with the Cotat brothers in Chavignol, Alain was his first supplier. Now largely retired, Alain has handed over his 12 hectare estate to his son, Fabien, but still very much likes to host the tastings which can be prolonged occasions, as he is given to opening mature bottles and nobody is allowed to leave until this process has been concluded. The estate has a plethora of appellations including 1er cru Meursault, Goutted'Or and Charmes, but we retain just two Villages sites for selling throughout the year, Limozin and Chevalieres. Whilst it is true that most vineyards in Meursault share an east-facing exposure, there are dramatic differences of flavour profile, and the 'buttery' moniker for Meursault is a bit of a myth for many of the vineyards. The Limozin which sits below the Genevrières on the Puligny to Meursault road does have some butteriness, and in 2013 has the chiselled elegance of the vintage, whereas the Chevalieres - at the north end of the village towards Auxey-Duresses

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and at higher altitude – resembles much more a Chablis in style: some well integrated oak, but its steely austerity makes the palate salivate. This is a traditional estate, blissfully unmediatic, where, despite always harvesting late – in 2013 in the second week of October – they seem to be able to retain freshness and minerality, not to mention reasonable pricing!

Auxey–Duresses Blanc	12x75cl
Meursault, Les Chevalières	6x75cl
Meursault, Le Limozin	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Jean–Philippe Fichet, Meursault**

The 2013 vintage represents a 35% deficit on a ‘normal’ harvest, although the picture is better than 2012 or 2014. The style is evolving here, as Jean–Philippe moves towards a more reductive style of winemaking. The wines are pressed more gently and for longer, with a more severe débourage. The Tesson was described in my notes as ‘goldilocks’ – just right...

Auxey–Duresses Blanc	12x75cl
Meursault	12x75cl
Meursault, Le Tesson	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Sébastien Magnien, Meursault**

A new kid on the block, this is the second time that Sébastien’s wines have been included in our IBD Offer. Certainly one to watch as the wines improve year on year; 2013 represents a new high point, with a cellar of consistently very good wines. The Saint Romain shows the minerality and tension of this cooler appellation, whilst Sébastien’s tiny portion of Premier Cru Puligny Foliatières highlights that this is a young man who can make wines of real class. The spicy Beaune Aigrots represents phenomenal value for money and should not be missed.

Harvest began on the 27th October for the white wines, with the reds following a week later. Sébastien, ever relaxed, explained that there was no difficulty with rot and that the grapes were healthy. One has the impression that this all comes very naturally to him!

Saint–Romain Blanc, Sous le Château	12x75cl
Puligny–Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Foliatières	6x75cl
Beaune Rouge 1er Cru, Les Aigrots	6x75cl

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### **Domaine Cherisey–Martelet, Blagny – NEW**

This long established estate, founded in 1811, and totalling 9 hectares, is run by the sixth generation of the de Montlivaut family, Hélène Cherisey and her husband, Laurent Martelet in Blagny. The small hamlet of Blagny sits in the hills above Puligny–Montrachet and Meursault, at a higher altitude than both the Perrières on the Meursault side and the Truffière on that of Puligny. Blagny’s south east facing, argilo–calcaire slopes produce wines of striking minerality from vines with an average age in excess of 60 years. Everything is hand harvested and the average annual production hovers around 2000 cases with the majority coming from two sites: Puligny 1er cru Hameau de Blagny – 1.7 hectares planted in 1950 – and Meursault–Blagny 1er cru la Genelotte – 3.5 hectares planted between 1946 and 1955. These are rare and remarkable wines.

Puligny–Montrachet 1er Cru, Hameau de Blagny	6x75cl
Meursault–Blagny 1er Cru, La Genelotte	6x75cl

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### **Château de Puligny–Montrachet, Puligny–Montrachet**

The style of wines at Château de Puligny has moved on once again, taking another step up in quality as Etienne establishes it as one of the premier addresses for White Burgundy. The proportion of new oak remains low, with more demi–muids being used instead of the standard 228l Burgundy pièce. In addition, partially as a means of fighting against premature oxidation, the style is moving towards a more reductive, mineral style with the focus on precision and freshness. The domaine has been certified organic since the 2012 vintage and they also use biodynamic preparations in the vineyard.

Bourgogne, Clos du Château	12x75cl
Monthélie 1er Cru, Les Duressees	12x75cl
Saint–Aubin 1er Cru, En Remilly	12x75cl
Chassagne–Montrachet	12x75cl
Meursault	12x75cl
Puligny–Montrachet	12x75cl
Meursault 1er Cru, Les Poruzots	12x75cl
Puligny–Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Chalumeaux	12x75cl
Puligny–Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Folatières	6x75cl
Chevalier–Montrachet	6x75cl
Monthélie Rouge	12x75cl

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### **Domaine Vincent et Sophie Morey, Chassagne–Montrachet**

Vincent began harvesting on the 3rd October, and explained that Chassagne was not affected by the rains on the weekend that followed, with the weather remaining dry until the 16th. The house style is one of open wines which are ready to drink but can reward those with the patience to cellar them. The Santenay Blanc sees is very commercial with excellent balance of fruit and toasty oak, whilst its red counterpart is packed with open, red Pinot fruit and a hint of toast from the 30% new oak. Truffière has incredible freshness and is an absolute steal for Premier Cru Puligny.

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Santenay Blanc, Les Hâtes	12x75cl
Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru, La Truffière	12x75cl
Santenay Rouge, Les Hâtes	12x75cl

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#### **Domaine Philippe Colin, Chassagne-Montrachet**

The reds are now made by Philippe's assistant, Géraldine, whose lighter touch is paying dividends in the form of delicate, elegant and fruit-forward wines which are much softer and more supple than before. It is perhaps not politically correct to say that they have benefitted from a woman's touch, but it is difficult to argue otherwise! Philippe continues to make the white wines in his hallmark mineral, fine style and 2013 represents a huge success.

They began harvesting at the end of September with the Chardonnay, before moving on to the Pinot Noir a week later.

Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Chenevottes	6x75cl
Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Vergers	6x75cl
Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru, La Grande Montagne*	12x75cl
Santenay 1er Cru, Les Gravières	12x75cl
Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge, Les Chênes	12x75cl

*\*please note this wine was made only in the 2013 vintage and does not form a regular part of our offering*

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#### **Domaine Marc Colin, Saint-Aubin**

This family domaine situated in the hamlet of Gamay, which abuts Saint-Aubin, is now run by the children of Marc Colin. The Fontenotte vines are fifteen years old, situated in a cool site at the back of the valley. With 50% raised in foudres, the oak influence is subtle and maintains the freshness of the site. En Montceau is made from 60 year old vines with give great concentration and mineral expression. The red Premier Cru is a blend of three parcels and sees just 10% new oak, giving a fresh, clean and balanced wine.

Damien declared himself happy with the vintage, with yields broadly similar to 2011. Harvesting for the 15ha of Chardonnay began on the 29th September, followed by the 4ha of Pinot Noir. There has been a move away from batonnage and new oak, with many of the wines now raised 50% in foudres. The result is that the wines are much finer and more elegant with a less obvious oak influence.

Bourgogne Chardonnay, La Combe	12x75cl
Saint-Aubin, La Fontenotte	12x75cl
Saint-Aubin 1er Cru, En Montceau	12x75cl
Bourgogne Pinot Noir	12x75cl
Saint-Aubin Rouge 1er Cru	12x75cl

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### **Domaine Jean–Claude Bachelet, Saint–Aubin**

An historic domaine once housed in slightly tumbledown cellars, they are now situated in a spotless new building in the village of Gamay, just below the Chatenière vineyard. Though it still retains the name of Jean–Claude, this domaine is now run by his two sons Benoît and Jean–Baptiste. The Champlots is rounded and ripe, a very open and friendly wine. Les Aubues is situated high in Puligny above the Premier Cru vineyards and just below the Batard–Montrachet. Unsurprisingly the Derrière la Tour vineyard is behind the tower in Gamay.

2013 represented a relatively good harvest in terms of yield, at 45hl/ha around 85% of a ‘normal’ crop, more than either 2012 or 2014. Harvest began on Friday the 30th September with the white wines, which were harvested by Sunday the 6th October, with the Pinot Noir harvested after.

Saint–Aubin Blanc 1er Cru, Les Champlots	12x75cl
Puligny–Montrachet, Les Aubues	6x75cl
Chassagne–Montrachet 1er Cru, les Macherelles	6x75cl
Saint–Aubin Rouge 1er Cru, Derrière la Tour	12x75cl

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### **Domaine Henri Prudhon, Saint–Aubin**

The Prudhon family have provided the mayors of St Aubin for two generations and will probably run to a third, such is the local respect for this delightful family. They have 14.5 hectares largely in St Aubin and Gamay, but also have some plots in Chassagne and Puligny, and are one of the few estates left making top quality wine from Pinot Noir. The Villages white, ‘le Ban’ are situated at the western end of the St Aubin heading out towards Rochepot with a south–south–east exposure, 10 to 40 year old vines. At 400m, this is a cool climate site, 2.66 hectares, which produce a wine that is always elegant and crisp; no new oak is used. The half hectare of 1er cru Sentier du Clou has a slightly different exposition, east–south–east, and is the most taut of their white 1er crus; the 35 year old vines are generally the last picked – 4/5th October in 2013, where the resultant wine has both precision and great length. Their famous red 1er cru les Frionnes, nearly a hectare in size, shares the same exposure, but is further down the slope, 30 to 60 year old vines; it is bottled early, generally in September, to capture the fruit: in 2013 it is forward and ‘gourmand’, very pretty Pinot. The cuvee ‘Rouges Gorges’ is made up from two different 1er crus, too small to vinify on their own, but the principal component bears the unenviable and uncommercial name of ‘Bas de Vermarin a l’Est’ – doesn’t trip off the tongue! There are 70 ares here of vines aged between 40 and 60 years. The style is more that of a ‘vin de garde’ – it is bottled later; the 2013 will be in March 2015 – and has a more animal, leathery character than the Frionnes.

In 2013, the Prudhon’s wines showed exceptional balance and freshness from the moment their malolactics were finished: a most successful and satisfying vintage for the Prudhon family.

Saint–Aubin Blanc, Le Ban	12x75cl
Saint–Aubin Blanc 1er Cru, Sur le Sentier du Clou	12x75cl
Saint–Aubin Rouge 1er Cru, Les Frionnes	12x75cl
Saint–Aubin Rouge 1er Cru, Cuvée Les Rouges Gorges	12x75cl

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## MACONNAIS

### Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon, Milly-Lamartine

An estate which continues to improve year on year as it gradually settles into its surroundings and the team learns how to treat each individual wine, 2013 represented yet another new high. As part of the fight against premature oxidation, there has been a move towards a more reductive style. All of the wines were bottled before the 2014 harvest. The Macon-Milly is fresh and open with two thirds raised in foudres and no new oak. The Uchizy was harvested first in 2013 with the aim of taming its natural exuberance; fresher this year, but with the hallmark tropical fruit. Half of the vines are particularly old 'Muscaté' clones which give a gorgeous perfume. The Macon Chardonnay is a choux-choux of Dominique, a 2ha parcel of vines in the village of Chardonnay which he fell in love with and simply had to buy. The Clos du Four is shared with Cordier, the difference being the presence of grass between rows - I leave you to guess which parcel is which. Finally, the Viré-Clessé is perhaps the most improved wine of the estate, formerly owned by the Château de Viré, the old vines are now coming into their own and it works work well in the fresh 2013 vintage which provides a nice counterpoint to the natural weight and sucrosity of the wine; a result of Dominique's decision to harvest on the edge of ripeness, earlier than anyone else in the appellation.

Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine	12x75cl
Mâcon-Chardonnay, Clos de la Crochette	12x75cl
Mâcon-Uchizy, Les Maranches	12x75cl
Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine, Le Clos du Four	12x75cl
Viré-Clessé	12x75cl

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### Olivier Merlin, La Roche Vineuse

With one eye on the future of the Pouilly Fuissé appellation, Olivier has renamed his cuvées to fall into line with the future Premiers Crus. As such the Terroir de Vergisson is now known as either La Roche or Sur La Roche (Olivier has not yet decided). 2013 was described as tricky, with a wet and cool spring ringing mildew, poor flowering and coulure, all of which served to reduce the size of the harvest. In spite of this the quality is excellent, with plenty of concentration and the classic ripe Macon fruit we have come to expect from Olivier's wines.

Macon La Roche Vineuse	12x75cl
Macon La Roche Vineuse, Vieilles Vignes	12x75cl
Pouilly Fuissé, La Roche	6x75cl

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### **Château des Rontets, Fuissé**

The domaine is certified organic and the proportion of new oak is minuscule; just a tiny proportion of new barrels are used on the largest Varambon cuvée before they are moved to the top wines. Fabio likes to keep the wines in a reductive state which allows him to use less sulphur. We focus on the Pierrefolle, a weighty and smoky wine produce from iron-rich soils.

He described 2013 as a difficult vintage, with harvest beginning on the 1st of October and finishing the weekend of the 6th. He explained that they managed a yield of just 22hl/ha across the domaine, principally due to cold and windy weather in spring which led to poor flowering; the domaine is situated at the top of the hill overlooking Fuissé and is subject to fierce winds. The upside is that the wines obtained excellent concentration and maturity. Stylistically, Fabio feels 2013 is similar to its immediate predecessor 2012.

Pouilly-Fuissé, Pierrefolle

6x75cl

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### **Bret Brothers/Domaine de la Soufrandière, Vinzelles**

2013 represented another small crop for the Bret Brothers; typically they harvest 16ha of vines, but despite increasing the surface area this year to 22ha, they still failed to make what they would have done in previous years. Jean-Guillaume described the vintage as 'magical despite a terrible summer and a terrible yield'. They began on the 27th of September and finished on the 7th October, bringing the grapes in much more quickly than is usual because of the threat of rain. Interesting to note that there is no new oak here at all, with the youngest being 6 years old and the oldest 18. They purchase their barrels second hand from top Côte d'Or domaines .

Macon-Cruzille

12x75cl

Macon-Vinzelles, Le Clos du Grand-Père

12x75cl

Pouilly-Vinzelles

12x75cl

Pouilly Fuissé, La Roche

12x75cl

Pouilly-Vinzelles, Les Quarts

12x75cl

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