



# Burgundy Club

Fall 2020



Welcome to the latest edition of the **Caveau Burgundy Club** – a twice-yearly tutored tasting and exploration of the great wines and terroirs of Burgundy.

This club functions just like our **Champagne Club** - (and if you're not already a member, email us - [scott@caveauselections.com](mailto:scott@caveauselections.com). Also, check out our new **"House Wine" Clubs** if you're interested in a steady supply of delicious Burgs at \$20-25 per bottle.

The wines in each 6-bottle Burgundy Club shipment have been specifically selected to help educate and illustrate – each shipment is essentially a Burgundy seminar-in-a-box. You can use all of this to stage your own tasting seminar at home, or of course you can just drink the wines one by one. Whichever path you choose – there's lots of good Burgundy in your future!

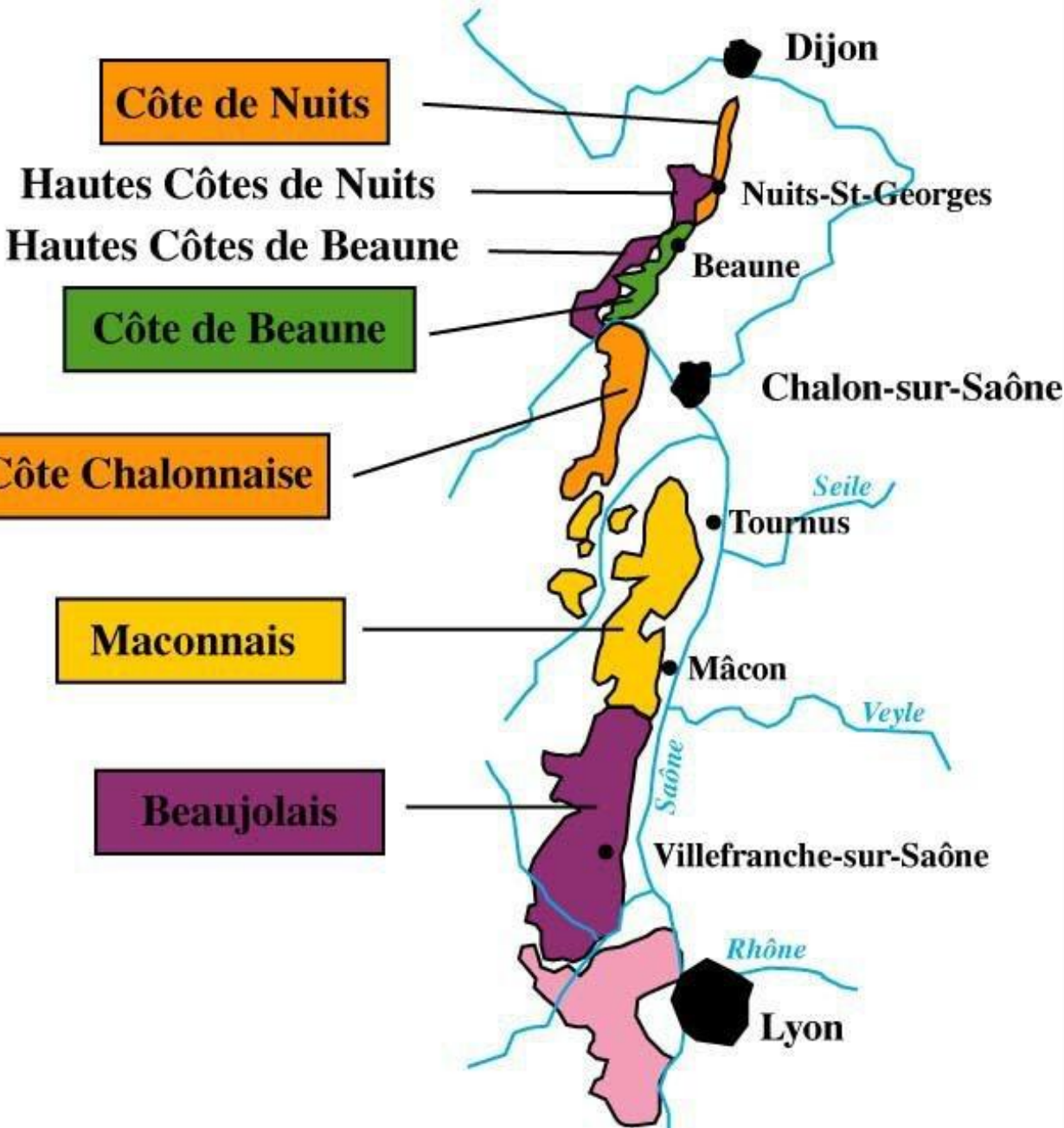
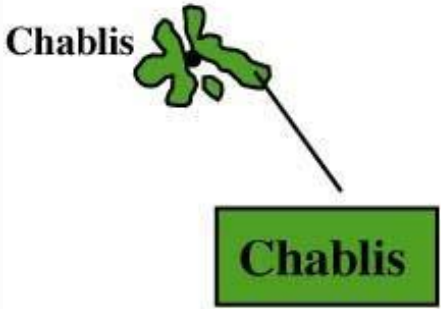
## What's in a Name?

In this package we'll be exploring wines from six of Burgundy's appellations that may not have the "name value" of the more famous villages, but in the hands of talented producers can deliver **excellent wines and better overall value**. Often we pay a premium for a "name" - how much is that worth?



In the cellars at Michel Mallard

# BURGUNDY



## Vosne-Romanée, Volnay, Chambolle-Musigny, Gevrey-Chambertin

These are some of the most famous names in Burgundy, and in the world of wine for that matter. There are a lot of magnificent wines coming from these famous appellations. And a whole lot of frankly mediocre wines from there as well. We've all likely had the experience of an expensive and disappointing wine from a vaunted appellation, and have thought "Hmm, I thought Vosne-Romanée was supposed to be great?" Greatness does not lie in the name alone. It takes talented, diligent vigneronns to capture the best expression of what their terroir has to offer. **The sad truth is that only about 10% of Burgundy is truly at the top tier.** There are nearly 4,000 producers in the region, with maybe only 350 of them consistently producing excellent wines that are worthy of our consideration.

If you have to have a Mercedes, you're going to pay for the Mercedes name. If you don't have to have a Mercedes, you can get a superb and satisfying driving experience from an Audi or a Lexus, or perhaps a VW or Acura (I'm not endorsing car makers here!) The point being, when it comes to Burgundy, a famous name doesn't necessarily guarantee you a superior product - it only guarantees you a higher price.

A great winemaker, working with vines in villages that are at a tier "below" the legendary names, is much more likely to make a wine you're going to enjoy at a price you're going to like than the average producer in the more "prestigious" villages. As I've been hammering home for decades, what matters most in Burgundy is **producer, producer, producer!**

So let's jump in! Before we get to the wines, have a look at the **Burgundy Basics** section below if you'd like to brush up on how to make sense out of what can seem a complex and confusing region. If you're good to go, you can just jump ahead to page 7 and dive in.

## Burgundy Basics

The Burgundy region of France has been producing what are widely considered to be the world's finest Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays for nearly a thousand years. Burgundy is a relatively small area (only about 13,500 acres of vines in Burgundy's Côte d'Or, as opposed to Bordeaux's 235,000 acres or California's 515,000.) Oregon has recently grown larger than Burgundy, with some 18,000 vineyard acres now planted.

As in Oregon, most of the winegrowers and producers in Burgundy are small, family operations. The average estate size is about 15 acres, enough to produce about 3,500 cases of wine each year. Those 15 acres are often split into 10 or more tiny parcels of vineyards scattered around several different vineyards and villages — so production of each wine is often only a few hundred cases or less. While it can seem quite complicated, even perplexing at times, in reality Burgundy is fairly simple to decipher.

**Red** = Pinot Noir. If it's a red wine from Burgundy, it is made from the Pinot Noir grape. (Beaujolais, while technically part of the Burgundy region, is truly a different world altogether. Beaujolais reds are made from the Gamay Noir grape.)

**White** = Chardonnay. If it's a white wine from Burgundy, it's a Chardonnay. (Again, there are minor exceptions you'll rarely see — there's a white grape known as Aligoté that produces some very inexpensive, lower-level wines — but it will not come into play in anything we're discussing here.)

Unlike America, France has legal classifications for their wines. In Burgundy, the actual vineyards themselves, rather than the producer or wines, are given a level of classification. There are four levels:

**Grand Cru** — The best of the best. There are 32 Grand Cru vineyards in Burgundy, accounting for less than 2% of all Burgundy wine production. Grand Cru wines mention on the label only the producer and name of the vineyard — as in "Montrachet" or "Musigny" — the name of the village is not deemed necessary in the case of these great vineyards.

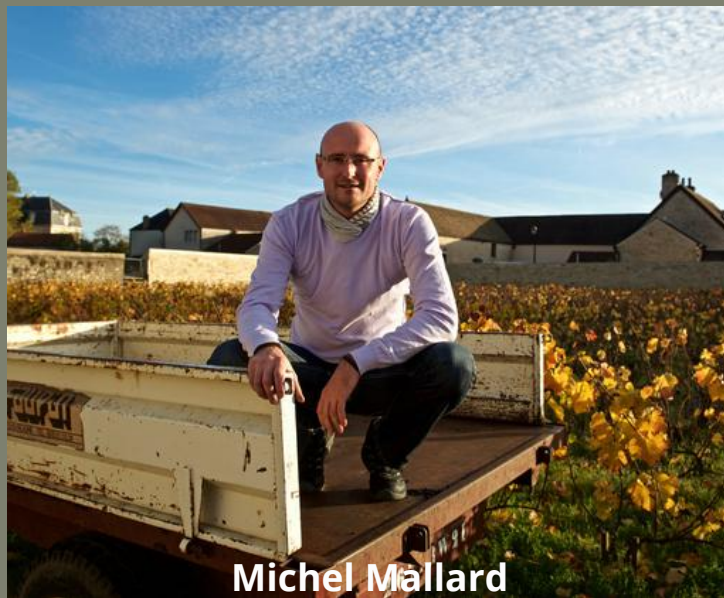
**Premier Cru** — (Also written as 1er Cru) One notch below the Grand Crus — there are hundreds at this level, and the quality varies widely. The best Premiers rival the Grand Crus, the lesser ones seem barely deserving of the ranking. These makeup about 10% of total production. A Premier Cru wine will mention the name of the village and possibly an individual vineyard on the label, as in "Pommard-Rugiens" or "Vosne-Romanée - Les Suchots" – if it indeed comes from a single vineyard. It will always bear the mark "Premier Cru" or "1er Cru". If the wine is a blend of more than one 1er Cru vineyard within a given village, it will simply bear the designation "1er Cru" without any vineyard designation.

**Village** — Grapes for a village wine come from one or many vineyards surrounding a specific Burgundian village, for example Vosne-Romanée or Puligny-Montrachet. These are classified below the 1er Cru level, but can often be lovely wines and great values. Village wines are about 43% of the total pie. The label will simply state the name of the village (although in some cases the name of a specific vineyard will also be mentioned, even though it is not of Premier Cru status.)

**Regional (Bourgogne)** — A bit less than half of all Burgundy vineyards (45%) are classified at the regional level. In the hands of dedicated and talented producers these can be lovely wines. In the hands of others they can be thin, weedy, and rather unpleasant. These wines are labeled as Bourgogne Rouge or Bourgogne Blanc, or Bourgogne Pinot Noir or Bourgogne Chardonnay.

**Most of the vineyards in Burgundy are owned by multiple owners** — as many as 70 or 80 different owners in some cases. (In the rare cases that a single producer owns the entirety of a specific vineyard, this is designated as a “Monopole.”) This means that each winery may own only a few rows of the vineyard, and will make only a few barrels of that specific wine each year (but they are likely to own small pieces of several other vineyards as well.) So, not all wines from the same vineyard are created equal. The quality can vary widely from producer to producer. In Burgundy, the most important consideration is in fact the producer. **Get to know the styles of different producers, and zero in on the ones you like best.** They will likely give you the most enjoyment year in and year out regardless of the classification level.





**Michel Mallard** - 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune "Beauxmonts" - \$44

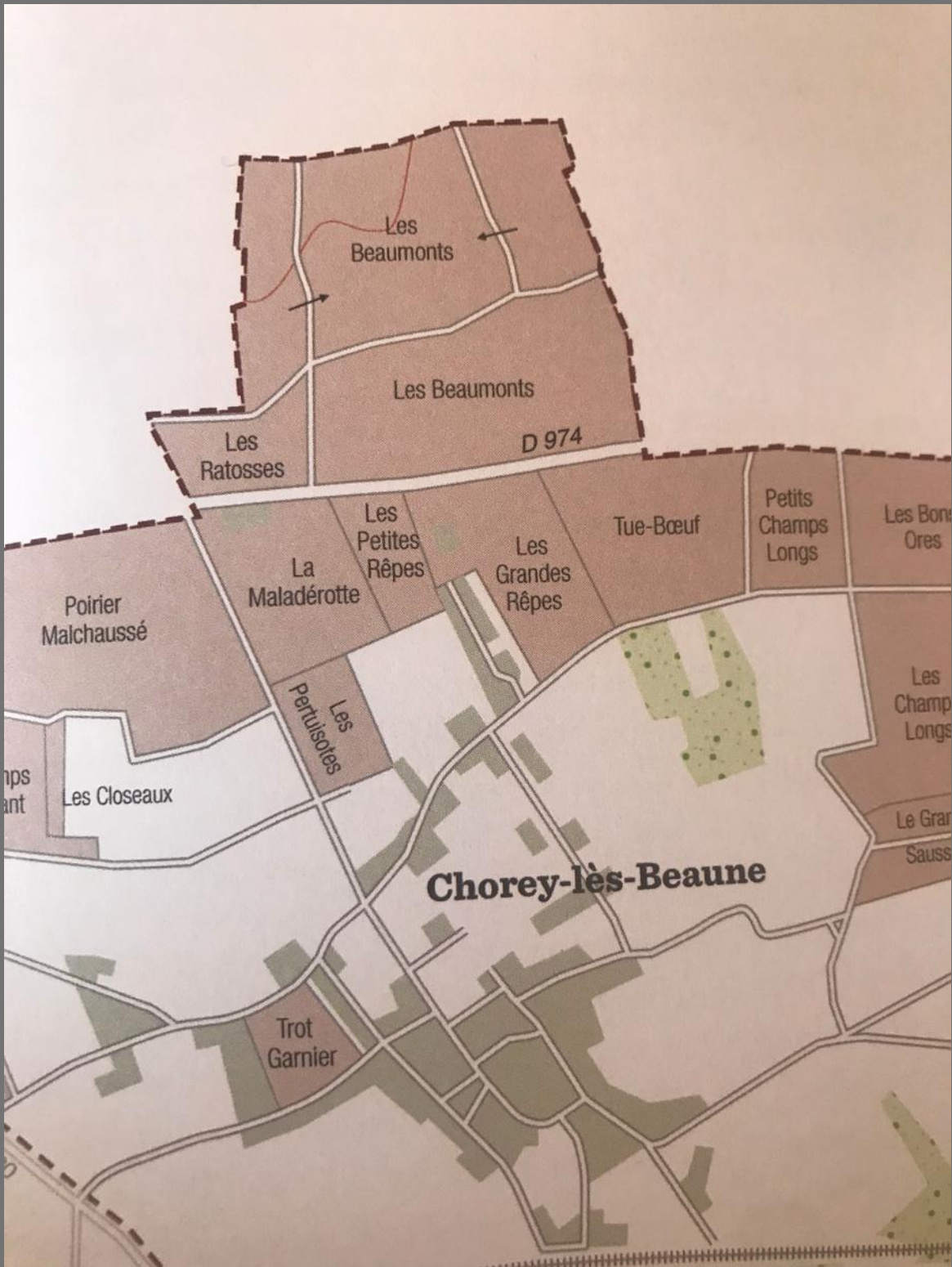
A relatively young estate by Burgundian standards, Domaine Michel Mallard is now in the hands of 3rd-generation vigneron Michel Mallard (the domaine is named for his grandfather.) In addition to making the wines for the family estate, Michel is also the hired-hand winemaker for the famous Domaine Eugène in Vosne-Romanée. The Eugène wines command stratospheric prices - though many folks on the Côte think his "humble" wines from his own estate are actually his best work.

Mallard is a rarity in that they sell most of their wine directly to consumer - not a model that is often employed in the region. A visit to their vast cellars in the village of Ladoix, just outside of Beaune, is always a wonderful treat. They make 16 different wines, and always have a vast library of older vintages available to taste as well. The estate only exports a tiny fraction of their production, and we're honored to be able to turn you onto their lovely wines.

Mallard's extensive vineyard holdings include four Grand Crus and five 1er Crus, and today we've got two of their Village wines for you - they're two of my favorites in the domaine's lineup, especially for QPR (Quality-to-Price Ratio).

Chorey-lès-Beaune is a tiny village just north of the city of Beaune, and while a bit under the radar has always been an insider's source for excellent less-expensive wines. There are 380 acres of vines all together in the village, all of which are classified at the Village level - there are no 1er Crus. "Beauxmonts" is the best part of the appellation, being the only portion that is above the RN74 road - the rest of Chorey being on the less desirable other side of the road. Beauxmonts measures just under 23 acres in total, with the Mallard parcel being 1.3 acres of vines that are now 55 years old.

This is an excellent Chorey - bursting with Morello cherries, raspberries and a touch of licorice, and it is an ideal dinner wine with beef filet, veal cutlets, sausages, and all sorts of cheeses. You can drink now, or hold easily for 5-7+ years.



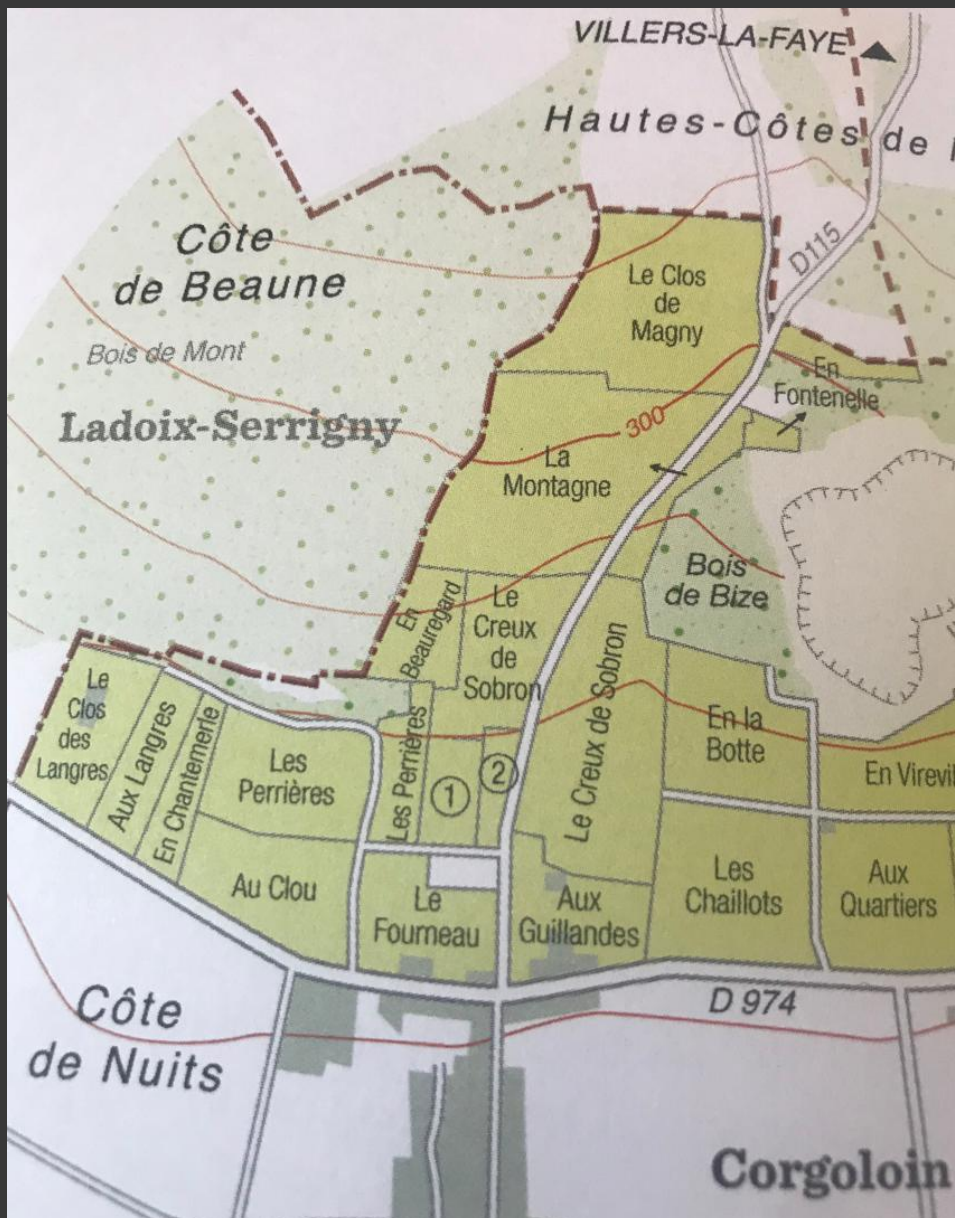


**Michel Mallard** 2015 Côtes de Nuits-Villages - \$44

Côte de Nuits-Villages is a confusing appellation, as it encompasses vineyards in five different small villages - Fixin, Brochon, Premeaux, Comblanchien and Corgoloin. Certain portions of Fixin are entitled to their own Village appellation, but the rest of Fixin and everything from the other four villages falls under the umbrella of Côte de Nuits-Villages. (Don't worry, there is not a test at the end!)

This wine comes from a vineyard in the village of Corgoloin called "Le Fourneau", which means "the Oven" - in the middle ages the village oven was on this site. (You'll see a "Le Fourneau" vineyard in many, if not most villages up and down Burgundy.) The Mallard estate own a 1-acre parcel of vines planted in the late 1970s.

Fairly similar in overall flavor and aroma profile to the Chorey - a robust mix of red and black fruits, with the added edge of a more pronounced mineral streak and a denser, richer structure. Another fabulous food wine, I love this with roast chicken and mushrooms, roast pork loin, and some *Citeaux* cheese.





**Domaine Huber-Verdereau 2018 Monthélie 1er Cru "Les Vignes Rondes" \$51**

Thiébauld has been part of our world since day one. Over the years he's gone from undiscovered vigneron to cult favorite, has become one of my dearest friends, and is now the President of the Burgundy Winegrower's Association - leading the charge to eliminate toxic chemicals in the vineyards and promote organic and Biodynamic viticulture.

He's a force of nature, having taken over his grandfather's 7.5-acre estate in 1994 and grown it into 27 acres today, while tirelessly working with his neighbors and colleagues to make winegrowing more sustainable throughout Burgundy. His infectious personality is infused in his wines - every one of them is full of life and energy. A Huber-Verdereau wine is NEVER boring!

The village of **Monthélie** is sort of a Chevrolet, sandwiched in between the two Cadillacs of Volnay and Meursault, to continue the cars metaphor. It is too often overlooked and underappreciated. It's main problem may be that most of the vineyard owners there are not of the artisanal mindset. A lot of the grapes there go to the negociants, and the village as a whole suffers from a lack of attention and deserves a better reputation.

Case in point this lovely "Les Vignes Rondes" - a solid 1er Cru on a south-facing slope that is essentially an extension of the famous Volnay "Clos des Chênes", but at a slightly higher elevation. The Huber parcel measures just a half-acre, vines that are now 25 years old. It shows a lot of the attributes of a Volnay, with some pretty perfume on the nose and a texture of raw silk. In the ripe and rich 2018 vintage there's plenty of fruit on the palate, and it's one to enjoy on the earlier side - now or over the next 3 years.





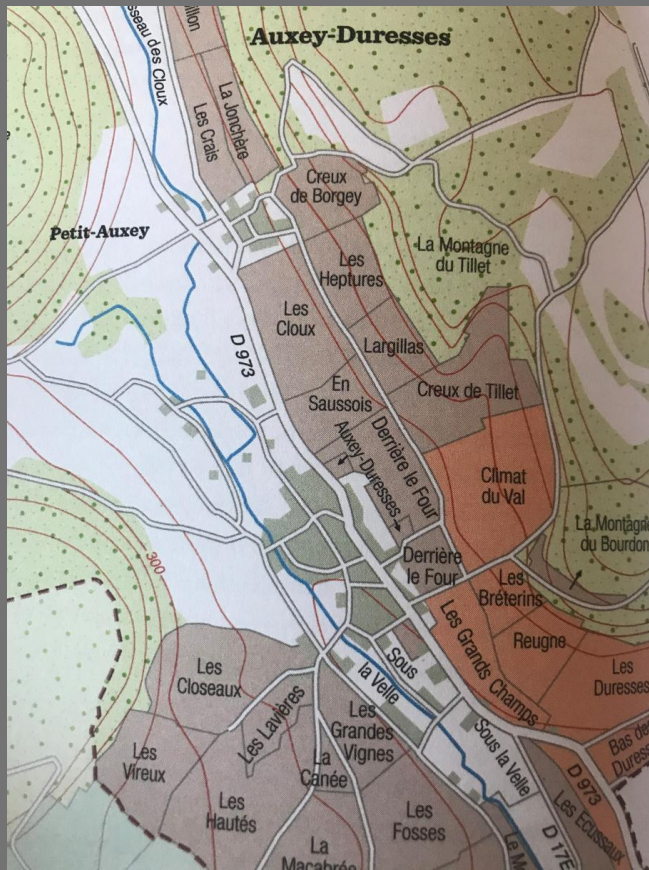
**Thierry Violot-Guillemard** - 2018 Auxey-Duresses 1er Cru "Les Reugnes" - \$66

Another original member of the Caveau team - Thierry Violot-Guillemard is an **OG** - **Original G**rower (though in his case the G could well be for "Gangster"! ) A true character in every sense of the word, Thierry has now passed the torch to his son Joàannes, who pilots the ship on his own now as of the 2020 vintage.

**Auxey-Duresses** is tucked up into the valley between Monthélie and Meursault, and like Monthélie has historically been overlooked. Never a "fashionable" appellation the potential for excellent quality is clearly there, and true Burg lovers have long known it's a good place to look for yummy stuff at much lower price tags than its more illustrious neighbors. It's one of those rare appellations where there are excellent wines in both red and white. The whites tend to come from the north-facing hillsides, and the best reds from the south-facing hill on the other side of the valley.

There are a total of about 70 acres in Auxey-Duresses classified as 1er Cru. One of the best parts, "Les Reugnes" is mid-slope on a very steep part of the hill - the warmest spot in what is otherwise a relatively cool valley. The Violot-Guillemard parcel is less than a half-acre of excellent old vines, now over 60 years old.

It's a powerful, structured wine, very typical of the appellation. Black fruits dominate, with a gently rustic earthiness that make it an outstanding accompaniment to most meat dishes - game, big roasts, veal chops. I'm getting hungry. Everything Thierry makes always has a touch of understated elegance - even from a power-terroir like Auxey. 2018 was a warm year that emphasized the ripe fruit, and it played well into the hands of "Les Reugnes" - this is the best example I've tasted in years. With a lot of "name" 1er Crus hitting \$125+ these days, this is looking like a pretty sweet deal.





**Alain Meunier - J-J Confuron**

**J-J Confuron** - 2018 Nuits-St. Georges "Fleurières" - \$69

Winemaker Alain Meunier and his wife Sophie Confuron-Meunier run this superstar estate in the Côte de Nuits. He's revered by his winemaking peers and is widely admired throughout Burgundy. He's now working in tandem with his son Louis, but Alain is still clearly at the helm for many years to come and in no rush to pass the baton.

**Nuits-St. Georges** is certainly an extremely well known appellation, but among the other jewels of the Côte - Vosne-Romanée, Chambolle-Musigny, Gevrey-Chambertin and Morey-St. Denis - it is just not thought of as being on the same level. Many Burgundian historians find this bizarre - as NSG over the centuries was considered at the top of the pyramid. It has perhaps fallen out of fashion over time, but the good wines from the village are still as excellent as ever, especially in the hands of top talent.

"**Les Fleurières**" is a well-situated vineyard on the southern end of Nuits, just below the band of 1er Crus on the east-facing hill. One of these 1er Crus, "Les St. Georges", is currently under consideration for an upgrade to Grand Cru - which many believe to be long overdue. Confuron has a sweet 3-acre piece of 40 year-old vines, farmed organically for over 30 years.

We're excited to be able to continue the vertical collection of this wine for Club members - we try to get enough of this to include it in the Club package most years. This 2018 is perhaps my favorite example since the gorgeous 2015. It defies the classic "hard and tannic" tag that is slapped on a lot of NSG wines - it's actually quite refined and elegant, especially in the context of the appellation. It's yet another awesome food wine - young we love it with grilled beef or a pork roast. As it ages it's fabulous with roast chicken and soft cheeses.



**A-F Gros** - 2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er Cru "Clos des Guettes" - \$89

The Gros family are winemaking royalty in Burgundy. There are, quite confusingly, four different domaines with the Gros name - **A-F Gros**, **Michel Gros**, Gros **Frère & Soeur**, and **Anne Gros**. The first three are siblings, and Anne is a cousin. Don't even attempt to unravel it - just enjoy the wine!

Young Mathias Parent and his sister Caroline Parent-Gros are the 14th generation of the family to make wine in Burgundy - one of their ancestors was Thomas Jefferson's supplier for his favorite Pommard! They make an amazing range of wines, from outstanding Moulin-à-Vent in Beaujolais to world-class Richebourg Grand Cru, all of which are really well made, focused and terroir-driven wines.

Savigny-lès-Beaune has long been a Burg-lover's go-to appellation for excellent wines at attractive prices. It used to be a bit of an insider's secret, but the word has got out over the last 15-20 years and now everybody is in on it. "Clos des Guettes" is one of the excellent 1er Crus in the village. It totals just over 33 acres. Long ago it was a *monopole* - entirely in the hands of one owner, but now is split up among a dozen proprietors. It's situated high up on the slope and faces due south, and creeps up into the entry of the valley where the cool air keeps it from getting too hot. This played well in 2018, as the cooler air helped the grapes keep their acidity.

Smooth and polished, with a firm backbone that should let it age gracefully for 7+ years in the cellar, it's rich and round on the palate, with nice earthy undertones and a kaleidoscope of aromas that evolve the longer it sits in the glass. Like every wine from the Gros cellar, it oozes class. Cheers!



**Caroline & Mathias Parent-Gros**

## **Next shipment in the Spring...**

I hope you've enjoyed our continuing exploration of all things Burgundian. Thanks for joining us! Watch your email for information on our next Caveau Burgundy Club shipment coming in the spring, and for pre-arrival offerings on all the yummy wines headed your way throughout the year. All the latest information is always available on our website: [www.caveauselections.com](http://www.caveauselections.com)

Please let us know if we need to make any changes to your account. You can update us on our secure form online at <https://www.caveauselections.com/credit-card-update-form>

- If you have a new or updated credit card
- If you have a change of billing or shipping address
- If you want to change your order from "ship" to "pick-up", or vice-versa
- If you have any questions about your Club membership

Launched in 2005, Caveau Selections is owned and operated by Martha & Scott Wright, importers and winemakers in Oregon, Burgundy and Campagne since 1999. Scott has been drinking and studying the wines and regions of Burgundy and Champagne since the 1970s, and visiting regularly since the 1980s. He Co-produced and directed the award winning Burgundy documentary film **Three Days of Glory**, leads annual Insiders' Tours of both Burgundy and Champagne, and teaches seminars here and abroad. Email [Scott@caveauselections.com](mailto:Scott@caveauselections.com) for more information.