



Burgundy Club! **Spring 2016**

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, call us at 503-679-6233*). The wines in each 6-bottle 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 and enjoy them. Whichever path you choose – there's lots of good Burgundy in your future!

Côte de Beaune Reds

This time around we'll be exploring the reds from the southern half of the Côte d'Or, the Côte de **Beaune**. The reds at the top of the Burgundy pyramid, the legendary wines like *Musigny*, *La Tâche*, *Romanée-Conti* – those are all from the Côte de **Nuits** up north. The reds from the Côte de Beaune may not enjoy the lofty reputation of their counterparts in the north, but they can be fabulous in their own right – as anyone who's had a killer bottle of one of the great 1er Crus from Pommard or Volnay can attest.

If you're new to the club, or would just like to brush up a bit, we'll start off with some good general Burgundy information to help you understand the lay of the land. Otherwise, please feel free to skip ahead for the details and info on the wines in this shipment.

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 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 make up 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 singly 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.

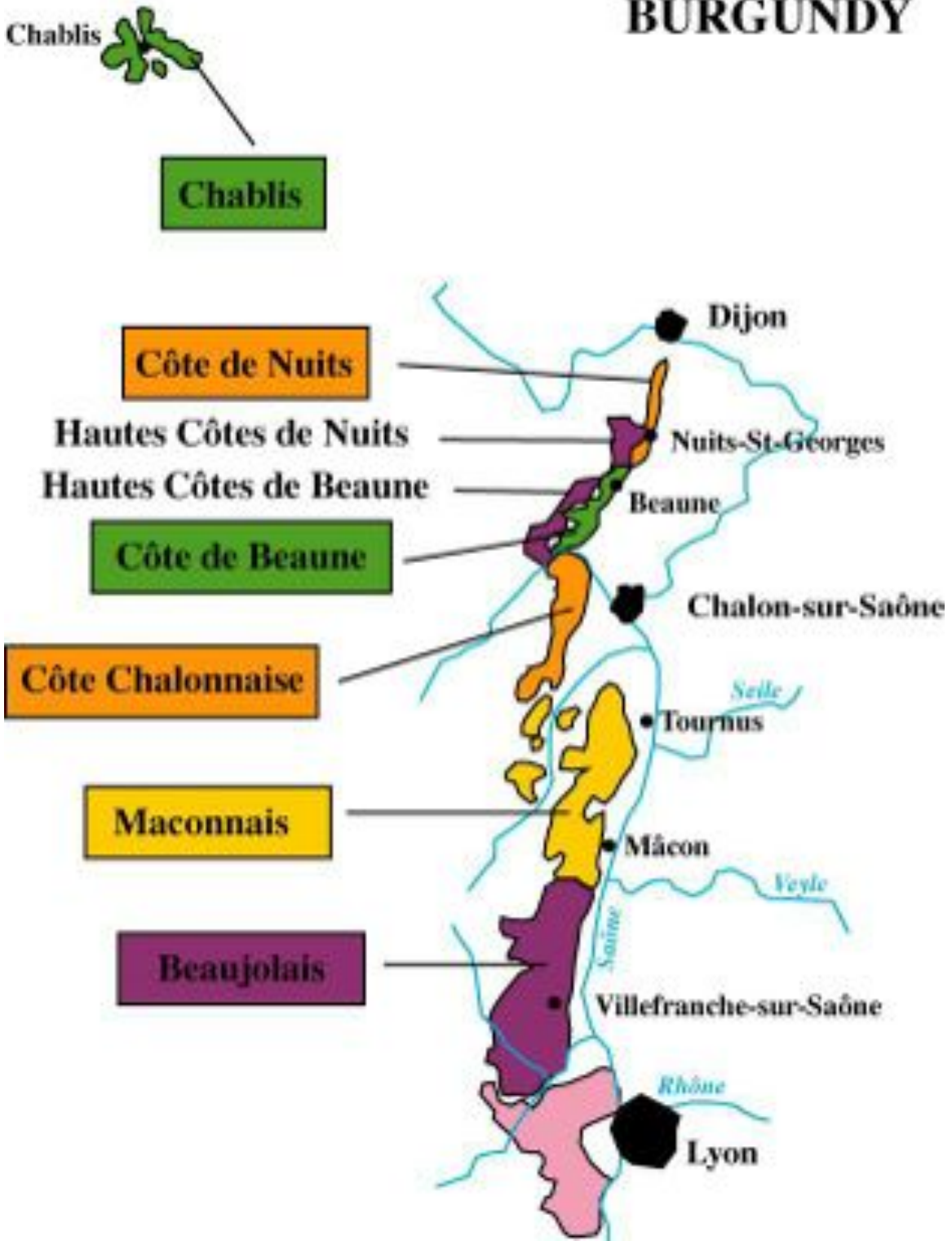
Village — Grapes for a village wine come from one or many vineyards surrounding a specific Burgundian village, for example Vosne-Romanée or Puligny-Montrachet. These are classified below the 1er Cru level, but can often be lovely wines and great values. Village wines are about 43% of the total pie. The 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.)

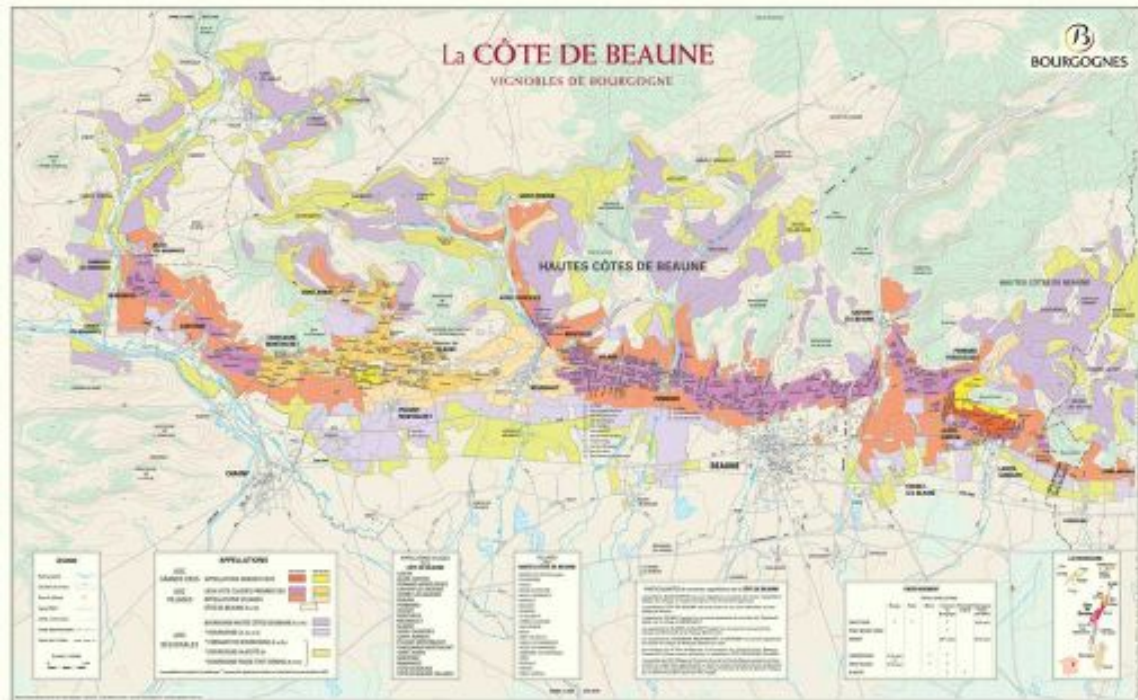
Regional (Bourgogne) — A bit less than half of all Burgundy vineyards (45%) are classified at the regional level. In the hands of dedicated and talented producers these can be lovely wines. In the hands of others they can be thin, weedy, and rather unpleasant. These wines are labeled as Bourgogne Rouge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



BURGUNDY





Côte de Beaune Reds

Named after the town of Beaune, the wine capital of Burgundy, the Côte de Beaune stretches from the hill of **Corton** in the north down past **Chassagne-Montrachet** at the southern end. Much of this region is actually white wine territory, with the contiguous villages of **Meursault**, **Puligny-Montrachet** and **Chassagne-Montrachet** undisputedly producing the greatest of all white Burgundies (and perhaps the greatest white wines on the planet in Montrachet itself and its adjacent Grand Crus.) The Côte de Beaune is capable of producing fabulous reds of elegance, or of power, but typically not both at once, whereas the best sites of the Côte de Nuits seem to be capable of both at once.

The only red Grand Cru in the Côte de Beaune is *Corton*, with over 400 acres entitled to the Grand Cru designation (though much of that is white.) The best 1er and Village red wine terroir here is found in the contiguous villages of **Beaune**, **Pommard**, and **Volnay** – with Pommard and Volnay being the leading lights in both reputation and quality. Many good reds can also be found in **Savigny-lès-Beaune**, **Chorey-lès-Beaune**, **Monthélie**, **Auxey-Duresses**, **St. Romain**, and parts of **Chassagne-Montrachet**. Before we get to the wines, we'll take a closer look at the major red-wine villages.

Beaune

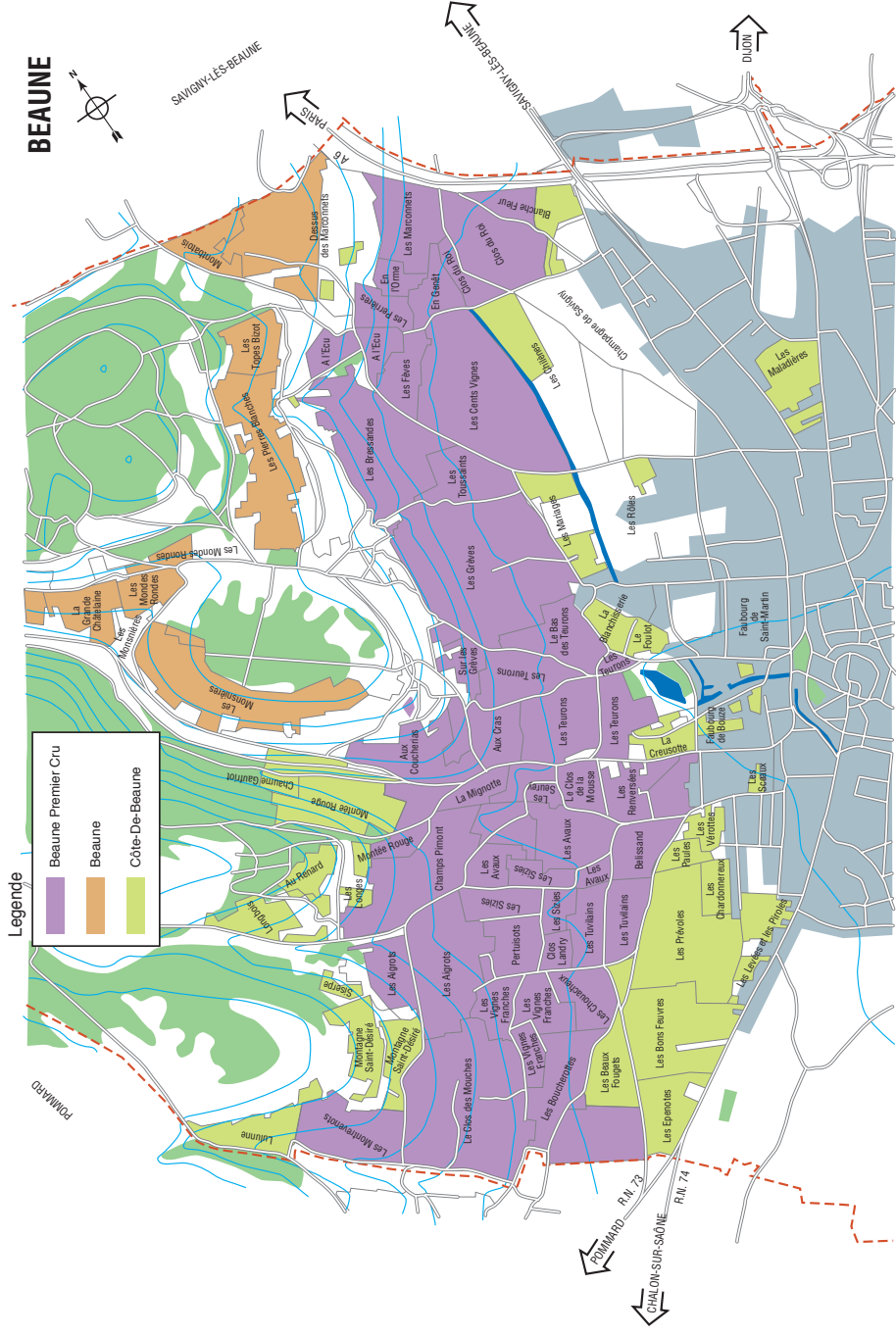
A town of 25,000 inhabitants, surrounded by ancient stone walls, Beaune has for centuries been the wine capital of Burgundy. It is the home of the Hôtel Dieu – the original Hospices de Beaune – the charity hospital built in 1443. The town lies at the foot of the vines. There are 1,174 acres total in the Beaune appellation, of which 825 acres, or about 70%, is classified as 1er Cru. Most of Burgundy's powerful negociants are based there – with *Drouhin, Jadot, Bouchard, Latour and Chanson* all calling Beaune home. It is due to the power of the negociants, who own or control a huge percentage of the vines here, that so much of the land is classified at the 1er Cru level. Modern thinking is that much of it is probably not truly deserving of that rank.

Wine writing of the 18th and 19th centuries seems to hold the wines of Beaune in higher esteem than we do today. Back then the wines were described as being soft and elegant and refined, which is not often what we see now. Certain 1er Cru vineyards, *Clos des Mouches* and *Grèves* most prominently, are highly regarded today, but few serious Burgundy lovers are passionate about anything from the Beaune appellation.



Winemaker Thiébault Huber pouring for Portland chef Gabe Rucker at a dinner party in Beaune...

BEAUNE



Legende

- Beaune Premier Cru
- Beaune
- Côte De-Beaune

POMMARD

POMMARD

CHALON-SUR-SAONE

R.N. 73

R.N. 74

LAINNE

SAIGNY-LES-BEAUNE

PARIS

SAIGNY-LES-BEAUNE

DOLÉ

LES MOULIERS

LES MAISONNETS

LES CENTS VIGNES

LES TOURNAIS

LES GRÈVES

LES TOUSAINS

LES CÔTES DE SAIGNY

LES DOLLIÈRES

LES RÔLES

LES MELAIÈRES

LES MONDES RONDÉS

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Interior courtyard of the Hospices de Beaune

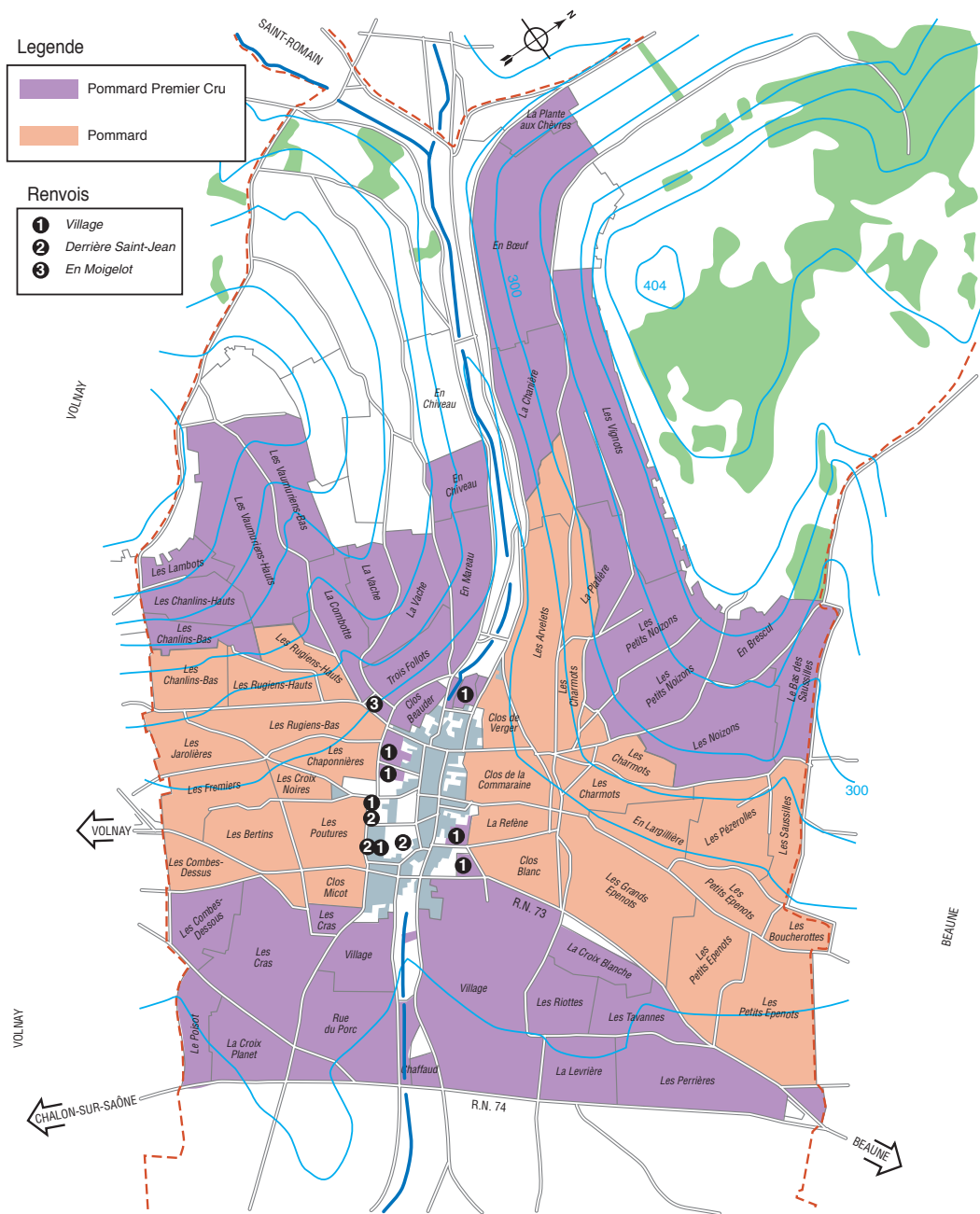
Pommard

It is when you cross the line from Beaune into the Pommard appellation where it starts to get much more interesting. Pommard is separated in half by a small stream that runs down from the hills in the west. Vineyards are on both sides of the village. On the southern side (the left side when viewing the map) the best 1er Crus are in mid-slope, as would be typical in the Côte de Nuits. *Rugiens* is clearly the finest of these. On the northern side, however, the best sites are further down the slope. Here the ancient river that was the precursor of today's stream washed massive amounts of rock down the hill, and deposited it where we now find the 1er Cru *Epenots*. Only Pinot Noir is allowed to be grown here - there are no whites in Pommard.

Some 600 souls call Pommard home. In total there are 832 acres of vines here, with 309 acres classified at the 1er Cru level. Broadly speaking, the wines of Pommard tend to be burly, masculine, powerful, tannic and dark-fruited. This is due to a high concentration of clay and iron in the soil – the exact opposite of the high concentration of limestone that exists in Volnay, immediately next door. Over history Pommard has been well known and well thought of, though has mostly enjoyed a reputation slightly inferior to Volnay.

Old-school winemaking likely accentuated the power and tannin structure that came to be associated with Pommard. Younger generations, with better training and technology at their disposal, are making wines that are infinitely more refined than was the norm in the past. That said, even an elegant Pommard would never be mistaken for a Volnay. The fundamental differences are generally as clear as night and day.

POMMARD



Please note – the publisher of this map made a mistake. The vineyards in Purple are Village level, the Orange is 1er Cru, not the other way around.

Volnay

Immediately adjacent to Pommard, Volnay produces wines that are at the other end of the spectrum from its neighbor. Descriptors most often associated with Volnay would be lacy, elegant, perfumed, delicate, and stylish. This is due to a very high concentration of active limestone in the soils, the highest of anywhere in the Côte de Beaune, and similar to that of Chambolle-Musigny in the Côte de Nuits. Like Pommard, Volnay grows only 100% Pinot Noir – there are no white wines here.

A tiny village of some 265 inhabitants (266 when I'm there – it's my Burgundian home base), there are only 526 acres of vines in the appellation, of which 283 acres or almost 54% are classified as 1er Cru. The Dukes of Burgundy built their summer castle in the 11th century in what is now the center of the village, and acquired many of the best vineyards in the village over the next few hundred years. The castle burned down in the 1500s, and where it stood is now Domaine Lafarge's *Clos du Château des Ducs* vineyard.

Wines from Volnay can show the most finesse of anywhere in the Côte de Beaune, though much depends on the location of the vineyard and the individual winemaking style. The 1er Crus *Clos des Chênes*, *Caillerets*, *Taillepieds*, and *Clos des Ducs* have historically been considered to be the leaders of the pack, and nothing has changed over the centuries to cause one to think any differently.



Martha on the jury at the annual all-female “Élégance des Volnay” tasting

The Wines

We have six different Côte de Beaune reds in this package, two at the Bourgogne level, two Village wines, and two 1er Crus, across three different villages all together. Between them you'll get a good cross-section of the terroir of the Côte. You might find it very interesting to open these six together and taste them side-by-side – this is often the best way to get a clear look at the differences in classification levels and terroirs.

These are all but one 2014s – so a few words are in order on the vintage. 2014 is a vintage that I absolutely adore in Burgundy. It produced consistently excellent wines that are a joy to drink, are very well balanced, and have a freshness to them that is quite irresistible. They are unusually appealing in their youth, meaning you can enjoy them sooner than would be typical, and are built for medium-term ageing. The Bourgogne and Village wines are likely at their best now and over the next 3-5 years. The 1er Crus will of course need more time to show their best, but in the case of the '14s I'd say from 2019-2025 should be the sweet-spot for most. Leading Burgundy critic **Allen Meadows** of *Burghound* has come out with a ringing endorsement of the vintage, and I heartily concur.



Thiébauld Huber in his tasting room in Volnay

1. 2014 Bourgogne Pinot Noir – Huber-Verdereau

CLUB PRICE \$20

Thiébault Hubert's Volnay-based estate has grown to nearly 25 acres with various leases and purchases, up from just 7.5 acres when he took over the domaine for his first vintage in 1994. He's just finished building a new winery in Meursault, and will be in place there for harvest 2016. His vineyards are certified biodynamic, and he's been a leader of the non-chemical farming movement in Burgundy for more than 15 years.

The grapes for his Bourgogne come from a 2-acre parcel directly below Volnay, and are on the flat land that has deeper and richer soils than the slope above. Some of the grapes from this site he uses for his sparkling wine, the *Crémant de Bourgogne* that has been hugely popular in our portfolio since the beginning. The rest he uses for this superb example of a "humble" Bourgogne Rouge. In all the years I've been working with him I think this is his best version yet.

- 100% de-stemmed
- Wild-yeast fermentation, minimal SO2 addition prior to bottling
- Vinified in tank, aged part in tank and part in used barrels
- Bottled without fining or filtration in December 2015
- 150 cases produced

In lesser vintages a lot of basic Bourgogne can be rather clunky and rustic. This 2014 is brimming with freshness and very pretty fruit. It's juicy and appealing and ready to enjoy. Cheers!



In the cellar with Thierry Violot-Guillemard in Pommard

2. 2014 Bourgogne “Maison Dieu” – Thierry Violot-Guillemard **CLUB PRICE \$26**

One of Burgundy’s greatest characters, Thierry Violot-Guillemard crafts some of the most beautiful wines in all of the Côte de Beaune from his family estate that includes prime holdings in Pommard, Volnay, Beaune, Meursault, Monthelie and Auxey-Duresses. He’s farmed everything organically since 1999. He’s a gruff looking dude with a delicate touch – his wines simply have soul.

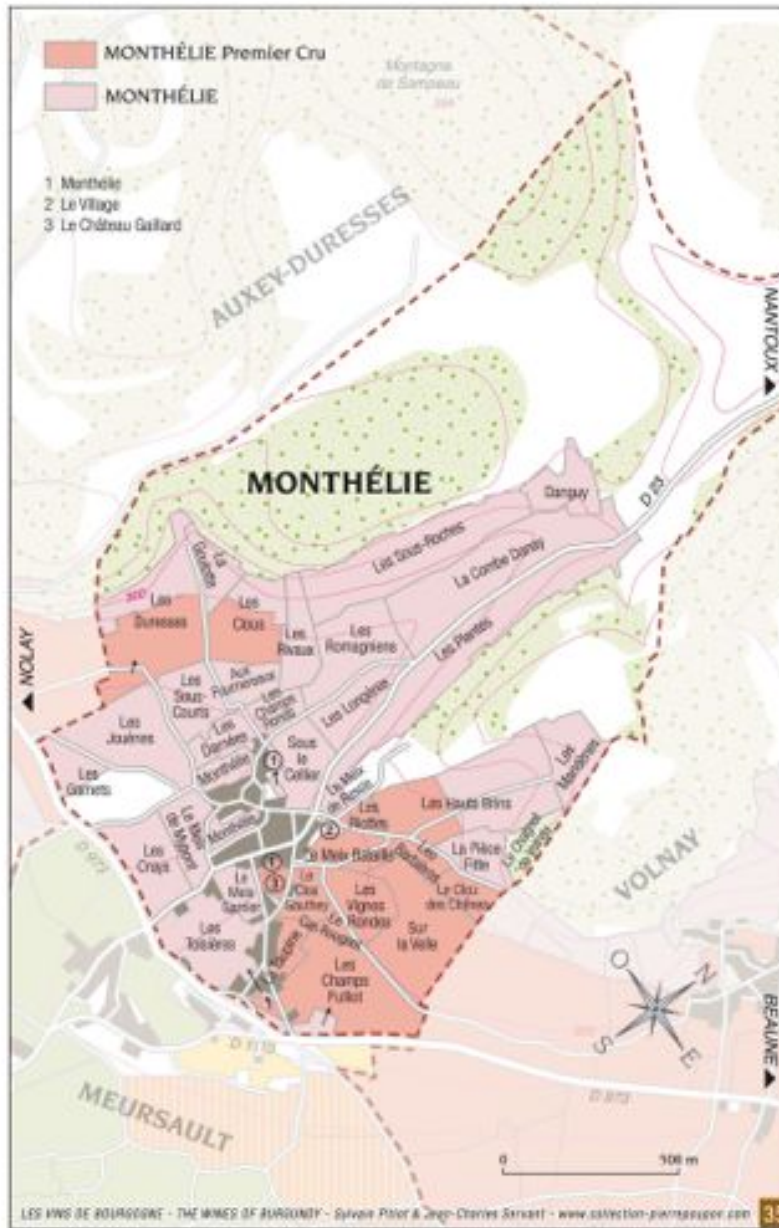
This is one of the finest examples of a Bourgogne Rouge you’re every likely to find. “Maison Dieu” is a vineyard parcel that sits just below the Pommard appellation. It’s on a spot that was formerly home to a 16th-century version of an “urgent care” facility offering free medical care to the poor. It was closed in the 1600s due to the growth of the Hospices de Beaune just a couple miles away. This is terroir that was long considered to be part of Pommard, and fell just outside the lines when the boundaries were drawn for the AOC laws in 1935.

- 100% de-stemmed
- Native yeast fermentation, minimal SO2
- Tank fermented, aged in neutral barrels
- Bottled un-fined and un-filtered in November 2015
- 125 cases produced

A very expressive nose of berry fruits and flowers, and succulent, fresh black cherry flavors on the palate. More richness and depth of fruit than is often found at this level, a killer Bourgogne!

3. 2014 Monthélie “La Combe Danay” – Huber-Verdereau **CLUB PRICE \$29**

Monthélie is a village that doesn’t get much attention, which is surprising in light of its illustrious neighbors - Volnay one side and Meursault on the other. There is a valley and a stream dividing Volnay from Meursault, and the Monthélie vineyards are tucked up into that valley on mostly south-facing slopes. It can get quite warm there, but the vines do not benefit from the morning sun like the east facing slopes. As a result the Monthélie reds can have some of the attractive qualities of Volnay coupled with the harder nature of Auxey-Duresses. These are wines to be drunk in their youth to enjoy the lovely fruit, as there is generally not much of an upside in terms of ageing. There are Village and 1er Cru sites here, though there is not a great deal of difference to be found between them, to be honest.



This wine comes from Thiébaud Huber's parcel of "La Combe Danay", perched high on the hillside, across the forest and just above Volnay Clos des Chênes. It's all about the fresh and vibrant fruit, which shows beautifully in the 2014 vintage.

- 80% de-stemmed, 20% whole-cluster
- Native yeast fermentation, minimal SO2
- Tank fermented
- Aged in neutral oak barrels
- Bottled un-fined and un-filtered in November 2015

4. 2014 Volnay “Cros Martin” – Thierry Violot-Guillemard CLUB PRICE \$44

Thierry is a 4th generation *Pommardois* (the term for residents of Pommard), and there's historically been a bit of a “Hatfields and McCoys” feud between the locals in Pommard and Volnay. Thus, Thierry says he had to wait until all of his ancestors had passed before he could purchase a vineyard parcel in Volnay (and he still imagines them all turning in their graves!)

Cros Martin is a section of Village-level Volnay at the bottom of the slope on the southern edge of the appellation just before you reach the border with Meursault. Wines from here can have the pretty perfume and red fruits that are the hallmarks of Volnay, but are not likely to have the silkiness and delicate textures found in the 1er Crus further up the slope.

- From a 1-acre parcel of old vines, planted in 1945
- 100% de-stemmed
- Native yeast ferment, minimal SO2
- Tank fermented and barrel aged, 20% new
- Bottled un-fined and unfiltered in December 2015

Thierry's delicate touch is on evidence here, as there's a prettiness not often found in wines from this site. Nice, vibrant fresh fruit aromas and flavors, and a lingering touch of, dare I say elegance? Bravo, Thierry!

5. 2014 Pommard Platière 1er Cru – Violot-Guillemard CLUB PRICE \$69

Now we make the jump up to the 1er Cru level, and as you'll see it's a pretty notable step up. More complex aromas, more layers of flavor, more refined textures, and significantly longer on the finish – these are the hallmarks of the better wines. *La Platière* sits high on the south facing slope on the northern half of the village, getting plenty of sun that is tempered by the cool winds that blow down through the valley.

- From a 1.7-acre parcel planted in 1936, the domaine's oldest vines
- 100% de-stemmed
- Native yeast fermentation, minimal SO2
- Tank fermented, barrel aged 50% new, 50% once-used
- Bottled un-fined and un-filtered in December 2015
- 300 cases produced

Vintage after vintage this wine has been an over-performer. This is Thierry's largest vineyard (at 1.7 acres), so it's the most widely available (at a whopping 300 cases.) Perfectly situated mid-slope, wines from this site show great finesse for Pommard. Enjoy!

6. 2007 Pommard Pezerolles 1er – Caroline Parent

CLUB PRICE \$99

It is a treat to be able to turn you on to a beautiful older wine – this gives you a glimpse into what these wines start to do as they age. 2007 was a vintage that made generally softer, more elegant wines, and now at nine years of age they are approaching maturity.

Caroline Parent is the daughter of two legendary Burgundian vintners – her mom is **Anne-Françoise Gros** of Vosne-Romanée and her dad is **François Parent** of Pommard. Together they share a winery in Beaune, and Caroline has her own label for wines she makes from her family holdings as well as other sources.

Pezerolles is considered a very special 1er Cru by Burgundy geeks. It sits directly above Epenots, and shares many of that site's refined and elegant qualities. Pezerolles is on a steeper slope, and there's more limestone in the soil, bringing a lighter touch in body and texture.

- From a .86-acre parcel planted in 1965
- 100% de-stemmed
- Native yeast ferment, minimal SO2
- Tank fermented, barrel aged, 75% new
- 165 cases produced

Ah, what a beauty. Subtle floral aromas, faded roses, ripe cherries, very soft and silky in the mouth, still showing plenty of fruit. Probably at its peak now. Enjoy it with a simple roast chicken with mushrooms or some grilled salmon. Yum!



Caroline Parent, with an 18th-century Burgundy vineyard map

Next shipment in the Fall...

I hope you've enjoyed our little tour through the Côte de Beaune reds. Thanks for joining us! Watch your email for information on our next Caveau Burgundy Club shipment coming in the fall, 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



Running through the vineyards with daughter Pirrie in Volnay, with Pommard straight ahead