



Burgundy Club

SPRING 2023



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 - orders@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.

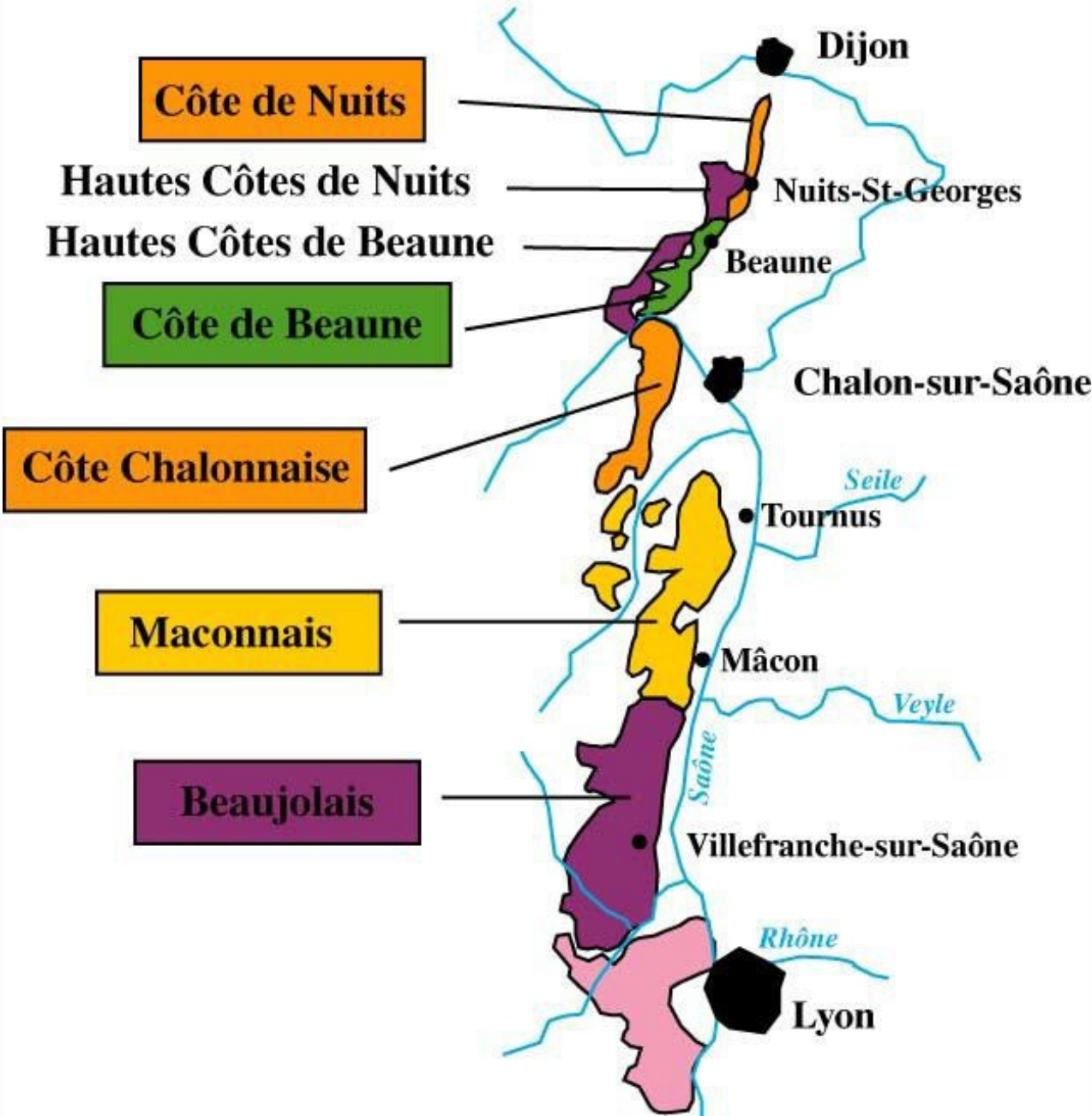
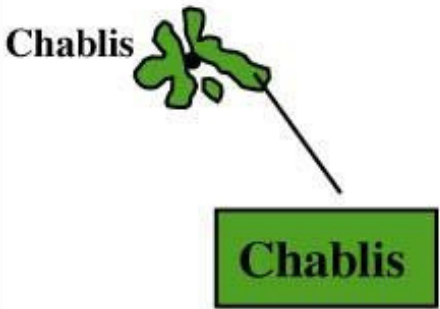
The wines in each 6-bottle Burgundy Club shipment have been specifically selected to help educate and illustrate – each shipment is essentially a Burgundy seminar-in-a-box. You can use all of this to stage your own tasting seminar at home, or of course you can just drink the wines one by one. Whichever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

Hidden Gems

As we've been saying for the last 25 years, often the most interesting Burgundies are not found in the "obvious" places. Sure, the top Grand Crus and superstar producers are there in plain sight for all (if one can afford them, that is), but for those willing to explore a bit beneath the glossy surface there are a multitude of treasures to be found. This time around we're going to take you through 6 wines from un-sung or under-appreciated appellations, including a treat from the Mâconnais that could become your new secret weapon. **Let's pull some corks!**



BURGUNDY



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 nice inexpensive, lower-level wines.)

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 simple 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.



Hidden Gems

Are the best wines Burgundy has to offer the top Grand Crus and 1er Crus from the famous domaines? Yes, that's basically true. Are they also now the most expensive wines on the planet? Yes, that is absolutely true. So - what's a normal, non-oligarch human being supposed to do? If you want fascinating Burgundy, you need a guide.

That's where we come in. Tasting and exploring Burgundy since the 1970s has led us on a never-ending path of discovery (some might call it going down the rabbit-hole) - but the result is the discovery of a lot of delicious and more readily affordable wines that are also more readily available - for those who know or care to look beyond the tip of the iceberg.

Many of the overlooked and under-appreciated Burgs are lurking in the "un-sexy" villages of the **Côte de Beaune**. If you dig, there's a ton of yummy stuff in **Ladoix-Serrigny, Aloxe-Corton** and **Maranges** - which we'll dive into in this package.

Another sector of interest is the "humble" **Village**-level wines from some of the more prominent appellations. They quite often get written off for being "just" Village wines - when in fact they can be downright exciting. Climate change has been a boost to these wines - places that historically were on the fringe have now moved closer to the sweet-spot as the growing seasons get warmer. We'll explore a single-vineyard wine from the famous appellation of **Pommard** that transcends what people think a Village wine is capable of.

And my hottest insider's tip takes us down to the **Mâconnais**, where the unsung appellation of **Pouilly-Vinzelles** is starting to get the recognition that the terroir has always deserved. Certain sections have been upgraded to 1er Cru status, and deservedly so. As a result the prices will go up, of course - but they'll still cost less than half of what you'd pay for 1er Cru Meursault or Puligny. And I'm all for that!



1. **Domaine Chevrot 2020 Hautes-Côtes de Beaune - \$32**



Pablo & Vincent Chevrot

For at least 10 years now I've been singing the praises of the "**Hautes-Côtes**" the higher-elevation slopes on the next ridge above the Côte d'Or. These sites have been the greatest beneficiaries of global warming. Previously these plots produced decent wine maybe once or twice a decade. Now they are achieving full ripeness year after year, and in the hands of quality-oriented vigneronns the wines are now consistently excellent - and have become Burgundy's best values to boot.

You've seen a number of the **Chevrot** wines included in various club packages in recent years. With good reason - these guys don't miss! Brothers **Pablo and Vincent Chevrot** (sheh-vroh) are on fire down at the southern tip of the Côte de Beaune, crafting impeccably made wines from their organically-farmed holdings across Santenay, Maranges, and the Hautes-Côtes.

The **Hautes-Côtes de Beaune** includes some 29 villages that span the upper slopes from Pernand-Vergelesses at the northern end down to Maranges in the south. There are over 2,000 acres of vines in the appellation, and over the last decade or so many of these spots are proving to be immensely interesting.

This wine is from Chevrot's holdings on the slopes outside of Maranges. In 2020, the warm and generous growing season really showed how far these plots have come. I really like this wine for it's core of pure, ripe black and red berries, and a lovely mouthfeel on the entry that makes you think it comes from somewhere with a much more exalted pedigree. There are levels of complexity here that we normally have to pay a lot more to find. This is my idea of a solid everyday selection. Enjoy!



2. Domaine Chevrot 2020 Maranges "Sur le Chêne" - \$39

Long overlooked, the appellation called **Maranges** is proving to more deserving of our attention as the "new" Burgundy continues to develop before our eyes. When I got into Burgundy (now over 50 years ago!), anything south of Chassagne-Montrachet was never in the conversation. Until 1988 there were three separate Villages entitled to their own appellations - Dezize-les-Maranges, Cheilly-les-Maranges, and Sampigny-les-Maranges - though these names were rarely if ever used. Wines from here were generally sold as Côte de Beaune Villages, so Maranges truly had no identity at all.

So it's only in the last 30 years that we've come to know and understand the Maranges terroir. Historically it was planted mostly to Chardonnay, but the Beaune negociants spearheaded a switch to Pinot Noir in the 1900s, looking for more structured and muscular wines to blend in with some of their weaker lots from elsewhere on the Côte. Today Maranges is 95% Pinot, though some of the white I find quite outstanding.

"Sur le Chêne" (on the forest) is aptly named - this site has the distinction of being the very last vineyard at the southern end of the Côte de Beaune and butts up to the woods. The Chevrots have a large holding here of some 7.8 acres - enormous by Burgundy standards. This wine consistently blows my mind - refined and elegant on the entry, plush and juicy through the middle, and a finish that keeps me coming back for more. In a word, very yummy stuff indeed!

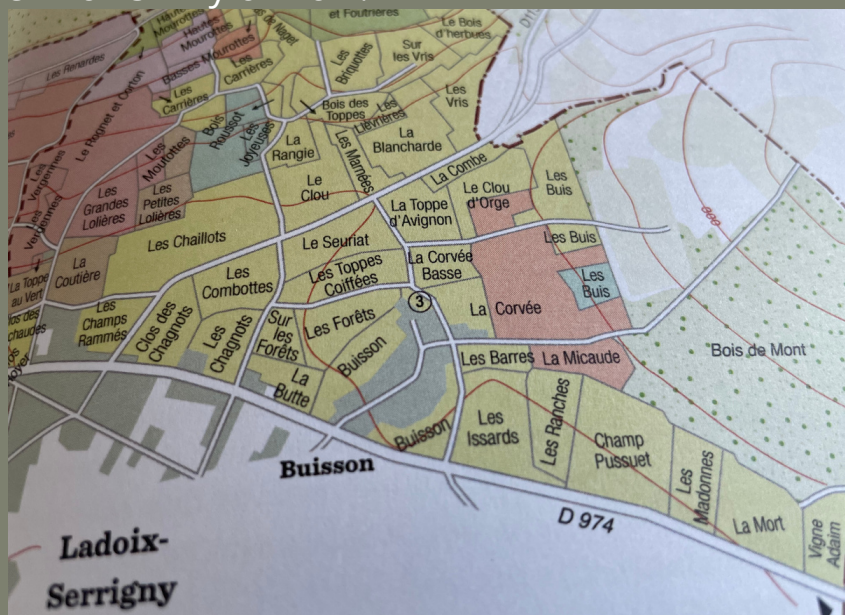


Fall foliage on the Hill of Corton

3. Michel Mallard 2018 Ladoix 1er Cru "La Corvée" - \$55

Now we'll move up the extreme northern end of the Côte de Beaune, and take a look at wines from two of the villages that are part of the Hill of Corton, both made by our friend **Michel Mallard**. The iconic hill forms a semi-circle - it starts off facing **east**, then to the **south**, and ultimately wraps around to face **west** in parts of the village of Pernand-Vergelesses.

We'll start off in the tiny village of **Ladoix**, which is basically a dot on the RN74 as you head north out of Beaune. The better vineyards are up on the hillsides to your left, where the east-facing slopes at the northern edge of the appellation can produce some delicious stuff. Bizarrely, most of the 1er Cru vineyards that are physically in Ladoix are actually included in the **Aloxe-Corton** appellation, but for no explicable reason some of them are not. This is one that retains the name of Ladoix, but no one knows why or how.





Michel Mallard

At any rate, "La Corvée" is a delight - it does not lack for power, nor is it too heavy-handed. There's a firm tanic backbone, like everything that comes from this hill. It's got serious 1er Cru length and depth - that's clear as soon as it hits your palate. While not inexpensive, with most 1er Crus topping \$100+ these days, the pricing starts looking quite attractive.

4. Michel Mallard 2018 Aloxe-Corton 1er Cru "*les Valozières*" - \$77

Moving just a few hundred meters to the south, and a bit higher up on the slope, we come to Les Valozières, an Aloxe-Corton 1er that is actually IN Aloxe-Corton. What a concept! This lies just below the Grand Cru Corton Bressandes, and is a continuation of that same terroir, mid-slope and south-east facing. A notch up in power, in intensity, and in complexity, this is a serious mouthful of intense, black-fruited well-structured juice.

Michel Mallard has significant holdings all over the hill of Corton, including four Grand Crus. He's a character and a half, talks a mile a minute and is never at a loss for words. Except when he's tasting, during which his silence is punctuated by a series of guttural grunts and subtle nods. (I've always assumed this means he's pleased with his wines!) He moonlights as the winemaker for Domaine d'Eugenie in Vosne-Romanée, which he never seems to want to talk about. Those are some of the most revered wines in Burgundy, but he shrugs it off almost as if he's embarrassed by it.

His own domaine has become one of my go-to sources for serious quality at pricing that gives excellent bang for the buck. Enjoy this beauty!



Thiébauld Huber

Next we'll head about 10 minutes south to the village of **Pommard** - one of the best known appellations in Burgundy (in part because it's easy to pronounce in English - though most folks don't know that the "d" is silent at the end. But I digress...) Pommard's well-deserved reputation stems mostly from its top 1er Crus - especially the iconic *Epenots* and *Rugiens*. Village-level Pommard, however, can be quite a mixed bag. A lot of it is often too tannic and earthy for my tastes. And then there's this magnificent specimen.

5. Huber-Verdereau - 2020 Pommard "Clos du Colombier" - \$79

The **Clos du Colombier** is a rare *Monopole* - a vineyard owned entirely by one proprietor. Winemaker **Thiébauld Huber** purchased the Clos in 2011. Previously the grapes from this 2.14-acre walled-in vineyard had been sold to negociants, so we've only had 10 years to see what this site does on its own. And the results are a triumph!

Pommard is divided into two halves, with a deep valley running between the north and south halves of the village. Clos du Colombier sits smack in the middle, perfectly exposed to both the sun and the cooling winds that flow down the valley - keeping the vines warm during the day and letting them cool in the evenings.

A tiny portion of the Clos is actually classified as 1er Cru - one corner of the vineyard is technically in *Clos de Verger*. (The Clos du Colombier is in the circled "1" - top center on the map below - with about one-third of an acre falling within the boundary of Clos de Verger.)



This is undoubtedly the finest Village-level Pommard I've ever enjoyed. There's a silkiness to it, lovely fruit richness, vibrant and fresh plums and dark berries, and a long, powerful finish that tells us this is indeed Pommard. Thiébault farms Biodynamically, and this site is plowed by horse. We're thrilled to be able to include this in your Club package - we got the lion's share of the total production this year!



Plowing old-school style in the Clos du Colombier



Christophe Thibert

6. Domaine Thibert 2017 Pouilly-Vinzelles "Les Longeays" - \$42

And we'll wrap up this excursion by turning you on to something you've likely not known of, but that you'll want to make a regular part of your world. The Mâconnais, Burgundy's southernmost region, produces a lot of great white wines at excellent price points. You guys buy a ton of Pouilly-Fuissé and St. Véran from us year after year - but you probably don't have the appellation of **Pouilly-Vinzelles** on your radar. It's time to refresh your radar screen!



The Mâconnais has always been a treasure-trove of good values. A new generation of serious, quality-minded young vigneron started pushing the envelope about 20 years ago, and since then we've seen an explosion in quality (not to mention the long overdue promotion of the best parts of the region to 1er Cru designation.) Now these wines can rival 1er Crus from thr Côte de Beaune - AND they're gonna cost you a whole lot less. This is a very good thing!

As well known as Pouilly-Fuissé is, it's immediate neighbor Pouilly-Vinzelles (Pwee-yee Vahn-zell) is unknown. That's about to change. In the hands of great winemakers like Christophe Thibert, this appellation can produce really beautiful stuff. This one is from the portion that will be upgraded to 1er Cru - and with one sip you'll see why.

A lovely, complex nose of white peaches, white flowers and some spice hints is followed by a mineral-driven mid-palate that delivers punchy, vibrant fruit that carries through onto a finish that just wants to keep on going. This punches so far above its weight I just had to turn you on to it in the Club package. Enjoy your new secret weapon!



Next shipment in the Fall...

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 fall, and for pre-arrival offerings on all the great Burgs and Bubbles headed your way throughout the year. All the latest information is always available on our website: 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 Champagne since 1999. Scott has been drinking and studying the wines and regions of Burgundy and Champagne since the 1970s, visiting regularly since the 1980s, and now spends up to six months per year in France. Scott Co-produced and directed the award winning Burgundy documentary film **Three Days of Glory**. Email orders@caveauselections.com for more information.

