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## **Burgundy Club! Spring 2017**

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)*. <http://www.caveauselections.com/champagne-club/>

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 one by one. Whichever path you choose – there's lots of good Burgundy in your future!

### **Value in Burgundy...**

...is simply not found in the famous appellations. There's just not enough wine to go around, and the world-wide demand seems unstoppable - especially with the amazing 2015 wines arriving later this year. You've got to look beyond the "big names" - in terms of producers and appellations - to find the wines that deliver a lot of pleasure for not a lot of money. Don't get me wrong - I love, drink, and sell a lot of the "famous" stuff myself. Some of them are absolutely the best wines on the planet - but they're gonna cost you. The one truism I know about Burgundy is this: -

**"You don't always get what you pay for, but you rarely get what you don't pay for".**

That said, I've put together this package to show you where some really nice Burgs for a lot less \$\$ can be found. As I often say, you just need to know where to look...

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 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.

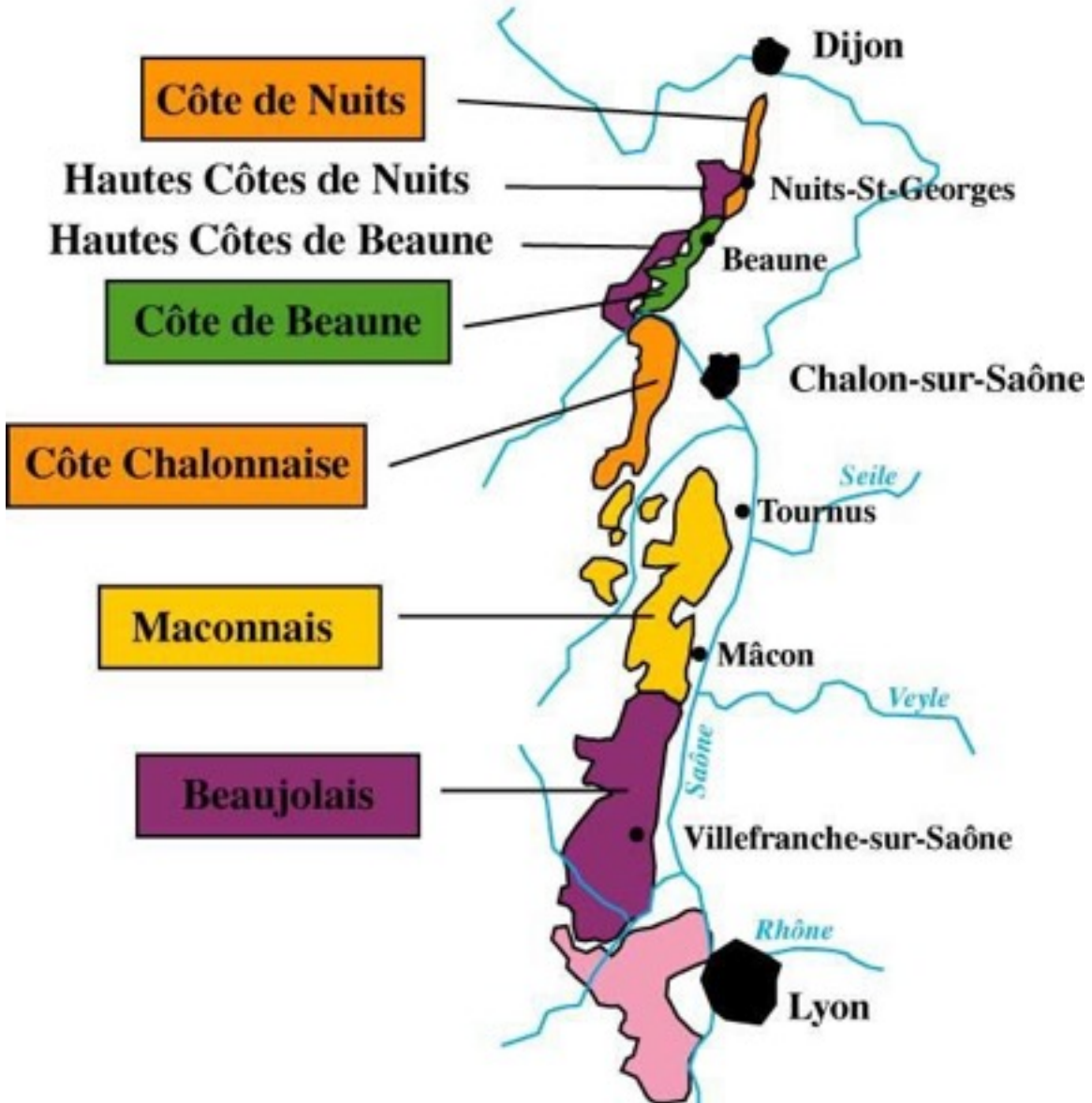


# BURGUNDY

Chablis



Chablis



Now that you're armed with some solid basics, we'll look at six wines from six different appellations. Each of these "outperforms" their classification level, and offers excellent value for the quality they deliver. There are even a couple of 1er Cru wines in here - let's dive in!



*Fabio and friends in the Clos Varambon in Fuissé*

## The Wines

### 1. 2015 Pouilly-Fuissé "Una Tantum" – Chateau des Rontets **CLUB PRICE \$29**

With even Village-level whites from the famous villages of *Meursault*, *Puligny-Montrachet* and *Chassagne-Montrachet* now going for over \$100 from some top producers, smart White-Burg lovers are increasingly looking south to the Mâconnais for more bang for their buck. Pouilly-Fuissé is no great secret, of course - everybody's heard of it (but most pronounce it incorrectly - it's **Pwee-ye Fwee-say**, not Pooily Foosay...) - and top wines there are now pushing \$50+.

The husband and wife team of Fabio & Claire Gazeau-Montrasi took over a neglected estate from her mother's side of the family in the mid 1990s, and have quietly become one of the benchmark producers in the region. Their single 15-acre vineyard, the *Clos Varambon*, is normally the source for two different wines every year. In 2015, they added a third.



**One Time Only** - that's the translation from the Latin "**Una Tantum**", the name for this yummy Chardonnay from their dramatic hilltop site. In 2015 they found that the juice from the later stages of the press runs was really exceptional. Typically they would blend this juice into their two regular bottlings, but thought this one time it would be interesting to keep it separate and bottle it on its own. If you've had their Clos Varambon bottling before, you'll find this more exuberant and robust, richer in fruit, with a bit less acidity, but with the same underlying limestone minerality we always see from this site. There's a lot to like here - but don't like it too much, as there will never be any more produced!

2. **2015 Les Chanterelles** - Domaine Huber-Verdereau **CLUB PRICE \$22**

Thiebault Huber is one of the young stars of the Côte de Beaune, known for his well-crafted reds from legendary sites in Volnay and Pommard, as well as some killer whites from Meursault and Puligny. With his main vineyards decimated by hail, frost, and other weather events in 6 of the last 7 years - he's lost a full 3 vintages-worth of production all together since 2010.

He went looking for other sources of fruit - but of course all of his neighbors on the Côte were facing the same problems. He struck on the idea of pursuing Burgundy's newest appellation, **Coteaux Bourguignons** - which was created in 2011 to allow blending of grapes from anywhere in Burgundy, and also allows blending of grape varieties.

This is a blend of Gamay Noir (90%) and Pinot Noir (10%) from vineyards on the plain below Meursault. 100% de-stemmed, vinified in tank, 15% aged in neutral barrels and the balance in tank. The result is a silky, perfumed wine with some nice floral notes on the nose, and good fruit richness as well. This is a really nice red Burg for the \$\$, and I expect we'll be seeing many more bottlings like this from many more producers in the very near future.



### 3. 2015 Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits – A-F Gros CLUB PRICE \$34

One of the greatest attributes of the 2015 vintage is that the wines were excellent across the entire range of appellations, from the entry-level through the Grand Crus. Top Burgundy authority **Allen Meadows** in the new issue of *Burghound* reports:

*“Wine quality is not only generally very consistent in 2015 but it’s good everywhere in the Côte de Nuits as well as up and down the appellation hierarchy. But as I took pains to emphasize, it is particularly good at the lower levels and especially at the regional level. I have never recommended so many examples of Bourgogne and Bourgogne-Hautes Côte de Nuits”*

And here is a great example from star producer **Anne-Françoise Gros**. The wines are now made by her son Mattias, who’s bringing even more polish to the domaine’s beautifully crafted wines. This is from a choice parcel in the village of Arcenant, high on the slopes above Nuits-St. Georges. 2015 was one of the rare and magical years when the fruit in the Hautes-Côtes achieved perfect ripeness and balance. The wine is plush and full on the mid-palate, with nicely balanced supporting structure and a sleek backbone. Perhaps the single best HCDN I’ve ever come across, truly.



#### 4. 2015 Bourgogne “Maisons Dieu” – Thierry Violot-Guillemard

**CLUB PRICE \$28**

And here’s another example of a “simple” Bourgogne that is flat-out rocking. We’ve had the opportunity to feature this wine a few times in the past, and it’s always a major crowd-pleaser. This ’15 version exceeds them all.

**Maisons Dieu** is a vineyard parcel just below the limit of the Pommard appellation, and wines from this section were sold as Pommard until the AOC lines were drawn in 1937. The Violot-Guillemard section was re-planted in 1997, so now at age 20 the vines are really coming into their own. It is named for an ancient charity hospital that once stood on the site, but was torn down when the Hôtel Dieu in Beaune became the regional hospital and replaced the smaller local facilities.

In the warm 2015 vintage, the Bourgogne-level vineyards performed extraordinarily well, exhibiting a richness and sense of harmony that is very rarely found at this level. This was the 2nd year that Thierry’s son Joannes joined him for the vintage, as they prepare to make the generational hand-off in a number of years.



*Joannes & Thierry Violot-Guillemard*



**5. 2014 Rully 1er Cru “Marissou” – Domaine Ninot**

**CLUB PRICE \$28**

Winemaker Erell Ninot and her vineyard manager brother Flavien have lost count of how many generations of the family have farmed these vines. They’ve had some of the same land since 1313 - which totally boggles the mind.

All of their holdings are in the villages of **Mercurey** and **Rully**, the two top appellations in the **Côte Chalonnaise** (directly south of the Côte de Beaune.) 1er Crus from here can be some of the best values in Burgundy, especially in the hands of good producers in an exceptionally good vintage.

There are some 200 acres of 1er Cru vineyards in Rully, of which about 17.5 acres is the vineyard called *Marissou*. It’s on a gentle south-east facing slope, and the Ninots have about an acre and a half here. The wines from here are generally lighter bodied than their neighbors in Mercurey, and decidedly less tannic. Their charm is their seductive perfume, and they definitely show better in their youth and freshness.

This is really quite gorgeous for the \$\$ - well-crafted, nice purity and precision of flavors, and a nice mineral edge to it as well. Yes, please!



***The Chateau de Rully***

## 6. 2012 Savigny-lès-Beaune 1er “Clos des Guettes” – A-F Gros

**CLUB PRICE \$60**

For many years, it was an insiders’ secret that Savigny-lès-Beaune was the appellation where Burgundy’s best values could be found. That ended about 10-12 years or so ago, as everyone discovered the appellation and the increased demand drove up the prices. That said, compared to Beaune, Volnay and Pommard - it’s still the best value village for Côte de Beaune reds of top quality.

I was thrilled that we were able to get Anne-Françoise Gros to part with something a bit older from her cellar. The 2012 vintage in general produced good to very-good wines, and as always the better producers made the best wines. This is a superb example, and now at five years of age it has moved into a beautiful window for drinking now and over the next couple of years.

The **Clos des Guettes** was once a monopole, but has been split up among several owners, with Gros' piece totaling a mere 1.65 acres. Anne-Françoise and her husband François Parent bought it together in 1995, and they share it between their two domaines. It sits high on a south facing slope, and there’s a high concentration of clay in the limestone-based soils here.

It’s quite elegant on the nose, veering toward black cherries and raspberries, and then solid and well-structured on the palate, with well-rounded tannins. With a lot of 1er Cru Burgundy \$125+ these days, this is a really nice value, and a wine I’m proud to be able to include in your Club package. Enjoy!



***Another gem in the cellar at A-F Gros (NOT in your Club package!)***

# 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 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. Email us at [hellocaveau@gmail.com](mailto:hellocaveau@gmail.com) or call us at 503-679-6233 if:**

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- **You want to change your order from “ship” to pick-up, or vice-versa**
- **You have any questions about your Club membership**

*Launched in 2005, **Caveau Selections** is owned and operated by Martha & Scott Wright, the founders and former owners of top Oregon Pinot Noir producer Scott Paul Wines. Scott has been drinking and studying the wines and regions of Burgundy and Champagne since the 1970s, and visiting regularly since the 1980s. He leads annual Insiders' Tours of both Burgundy and Champagne, and teaches seminars here and abroad. He is available to teach private seminars and conduct tutored tastings for your group – email [Scott@caveauselections.com](mailto:Scott@caveauselections.com) for more information.*

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