



scott paul
wines

Burgundy Express

Fall 2013

Thanks for joining us for the latest package of goodies from the Burgundy Express Club – a twice-yearly tutored wine-tasting exploration of Burgundy, delivered to your door. **This shipment is an exploration of six “Insider’s Secrets”** – great wines from places you might not normally look. This is going to be fun – let’s do it!

The Obvious, and the Obscured

Most everyone has heard of *Romanée-Conti*, *La Tâche*, *Chambertin*, *Musigny*, *Montrachet* – the greatest of the great in Burgundy. If you have the money (and you’re willing to spend vast sums on bottles of wine) – that may be all you need to know about Burgundy. Assuming you’re not a head of state or an oil magnate, however, it’s a good bet that you might want to find some killer Burgundies at less than \$1,000 per bottle. There are a lot of them of course, but some of them significantly less well known than others. To find them, you need a guide. That’s where we come in.

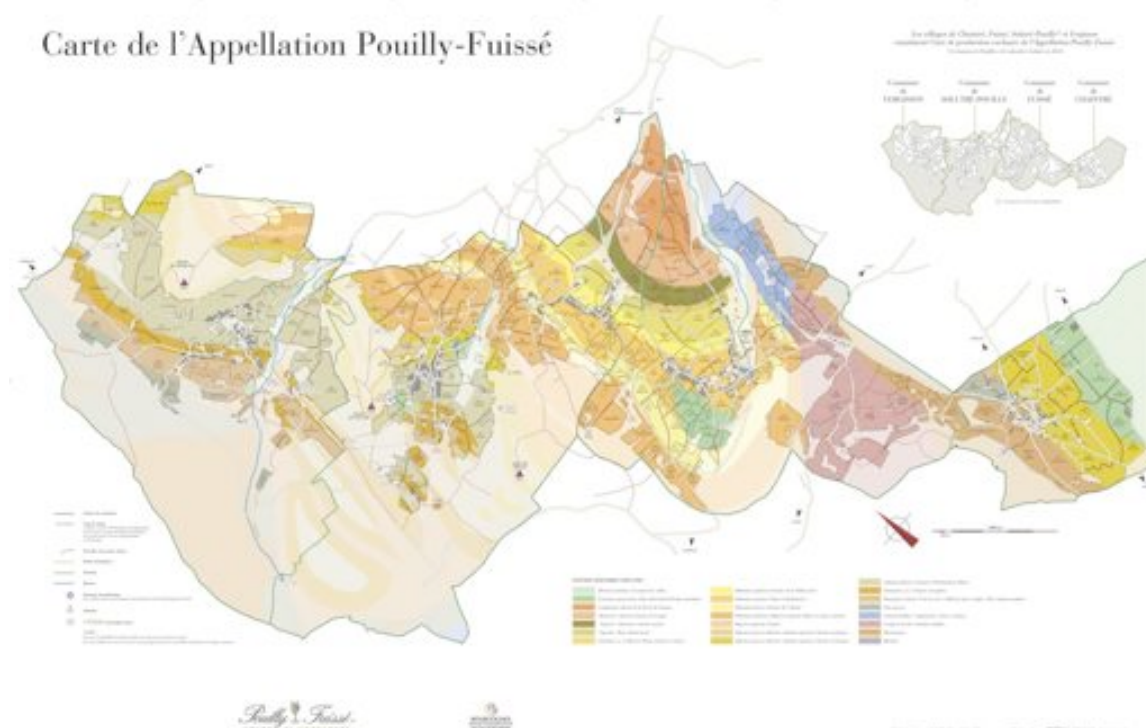
We’ve focused in a previous shipment on where to find the “hidden values” in Burgundy. What we’ve got for you this time is **a group of wines that outperform their somewhat humbler origins, often in places you might not think to look.**

Mâconnais, all the way

I love the great whites from the Côte de Beaune, in the rock-star villages of Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet. The best of them have no peers. However, if you know where to look you can drink about 99% as well for more than 50% less - if you turn your attention about an hour's drive south to the Mâconnais region.

Don't get me wrong, there is a sea of mediocre wine made in the Mâconnais. That's true for every part of Burgundy, for that matter. But if you zero in on the best producers working with the best terroir, you can strike gold on a budget.

I'm talking specifically about Pouilly-Fuissé. Yes, Pouilly-Fuissé (pronounced pwee-yee fwee-say, btw.) It's a very well known appellation, which pretty much became synonymous with "French White Wine" in the 70s and 80s in the US. Unfortunately, that led to a lot of industrially-made and rather uninspired Pouilly-Fuissé being produced, and the reputation of the appellation suffered as a result.



It's a very large appellation – covering four adjacent villages and a total of 1,870 acres of vines. There are over 25 different soil types in the appellation, so as you can imagine it is not terribly homogenous. The quality and the styles cover a broad spectrum, and the producers run the gamut from tiny family estates to enormous mass-market operations. Obviously, all Pouilly-Fuissé is not created equal.

This is finally being officially recognized, as there are now some 495 acres within the appellation that are being proposed for upgrades to **Premier Cru** status (currently all vineyards in the Mâconnais are classified as **Villages-level**, though clearly some are vastly superior to others.)

So if one looks to the potential 1er Cru sites in Pouilly-Fuissé, and the better small producers making wine from those sites – you can find some profoundly great wines that rival the best of the Côte de Beaune for a literal fraction of the price.

Case in point, the first wine on our list – the **2010 Pouilly-Fuissé les Champs** (\$53, **CLUB PRICE \$42.40**) from **Domaine Thibert Père et Fils**. Owners of over 60 acres of vines throughout the Mâconnais, Christophe Thibert and his sister Sandrine are the 7th generation at the helm of the family estate. Among their holdings are over a dozen parcels in prime sections of the Pouilly-Fuissé appellation, from which they produce six different single vineyard wines. Perhaps the most dazzling of them all is the one called “Les Champs” (“the fields”).

Les Champs is one of the vineyards being proposed for an upgrade to 1er Cru (as in fact are all of Thibert’s holding in Pouilly-Fuissé – their ancestors chose their sites well!) It’s in the foothills rising above the village of Fuissé, with just a few inches of soil covering ancient limestone beds. The wine is all barrel-fermented, only 20-25% of which is new. The resulting wine is a brilliant example of the best that Pouilly-Fuissé can be. Powerful, intense minerality, mouth-coating flavors, and an amazingly persistent finish. At less than half the price of a lot of mediocre Puligny-Montrachet, this is great white Burgundy that delivers greatness at a price that is much easier to swallow. (And the wine goes down pretty well too!)

Fleurie – the ultimate insider’s secret?

As we’ve explored in previous packages, all wine from the Beaujolais region is not Beaujolais Nouveau. And we are very thankful for that! There are four levels of classification in Beaujolais (the southernmost part of Burgundy), with *Nouveau* at the very bottom, where it belongs. Next up the ladder is simple *Beaujolais*, then *Beaujolais Villages*, and then finally the good stuff – the *Crus* of Beaujolais, the 10 villages entitled to use the name of the village on the label. These wines don’t even mention Beaujolais anywhere on the label, just the name of the village. Among the best known are *Morgon*, *Moulin-à-Vent*, and my personal favorite, ***Fleurie***.

I searched for years for the right producers and right wines to work with from Fleurie. Two years ago we hooked up with *Domaine des Nugues*, whose wines have been featured in a previous package from this club. Last year, my explorations took me deep into uncharted territory in the Beaujolais, where I found the most exciting new addition to our portfolio yet – **Julien Sunier**.



Hillside vineyards above Fleurie

Because most people don't know about the Crus of Beaujolais, the prices remain inexpensive, in fact under-priced for the quality. The best of these can rival their neighbors to the north in terms of quality, though few people tend to look for them. Of course it's a different grape – the red wines in Beaujolais are made from Gamay Noir, which is a perfect match for the warmer climate and the granite soils of the region.

As is the case with every part of Burgundy, one must spend a lot of time “looking under the rocks” to find the best stuff. For every great producer there are a dozen weak ones – always remember that the appellation on the label only tells you where the grapes were grown – it doesn't tell you anything about the quality of the wine or people who grew the grapes and made the wine.

My explorations through Beaujolais, and specifically Fleurie, have led me down any number of dead-ends. Undaunted, I always keep looking. When I find what I'm looking for, I get very excited indeed.

By the time Martha, Pirrie & I finally found Julien's home and winery in the tiny village of Avenas, I was sure we were still lost. Many kilometers of winding roads heading up-up-up into the hills, a narrow dirt road, barking dogs, and we arrived at what seemed to be the veritable middle of nowhere. Only a couple of concrete tanks under the tin roof of an open shed gave any indication that there was winemaking going on. Welcome to Domain Julien Sunier, Artisan Vigneron – quite possibly the most exciting new estate in Beaujolais in many decades. Young, aggressive, dynamic, committed, hysterically funny, and as passionate as they come – we immediately hit it off, and there was no doubt Julien and his wines were a perfect fit for the Scott Paul family.



Julien Sunier, in his kitchen-tasting room

In 2008 he started his own domaine after several years working for large negociants, with the purchase of just over 7 acres of densely-planted steep parcels in the prestigious Crus of **Fleurie**, **Morgon** and **Regnié**. Julien farms organically, and all of the vineyard work is done by hand (as the sites are too steep to work with tractors.) He shuns the “natural wine” tag, but works without chemicals and with only trace amounts of sulfur – in fact only a minute addition of SO₂ is made just prior to bottling.

I first heard of his wines in an article in the **New York Times** earlier in 2013. I then saw a bottle of his **Fleurie** on the shelf at **Caves Madeleine**, one of my favorite restaurants in Beaune. Caves Madeleine proprietor Laurent “Lolo” Brélin has an amazing palate and a unique talent for spotting the best new small producers – so when I saw and subsequently tasted the wine there I knew I was on the right track.



Et Voilà! Julien is producing the most exquisite, hand-crafted Cru Beaujolais you are ever likely to encounter. Silky textured, deeply flavored, nuanced, long – everything a great wine from the Gamay Noir grape can be. The **2012 Fleurie** (\$33, **CLUB PRICE \$26.50**) is from Julien's 5.9 acre parcel on a steep slope at the top of the Fleurie appellation. This is flat-out one of my favorite QPR wines of the year (Quality-Price Ratio). Fabulous stuff – just please don't tell anyone...

1er Cru at a Bourgogne Price

You may be aware that there are yummy wines at good prices to be had from Burgundy's *Côte Chalonnaise* – the region just south of the Côte de Beaune. The villages of Rully, Mercurey, Givry, Bouzeron and Montagny have the potential to produce some lovely Village wines, and the best of them are usually very good values.

What is not as well known are the 1er Cru wines from the Côte Chalonnaise. In both Rully and Mercurey, there are sites classified at the 1er Cru level that are capable of producing outstanding wines that are clearly significantly better than the Village wines in every way. Density, concentration, complexity, length, ageability – every marker of increased quality can be found in the wines from the better sites, in the hands of the better producers.



The village of Mercurey

One killer example is the **2011 Mercurey 1er Cru Les Crêts** from Domaine Ninot (\$40 **CLUB PRICE \$32**). Young Erell Ninot took over the estate from her father back in 2005, and quickly was singled out as one of the best young winemakers in all of Burgundy. Her Village-level Mercurey has been one of the most popular wines in our portfolio for years.

I love the purity, depth, and complexity of the fruit expression in this wine. It brings a lot to the table (pun intended), and probably blows away a lot of Village wines from the Côte d'Or at less than half the price. You could buy simple *Bourgogne* from famous producers at this price, or you could buy delicious, site-specific, terroir-driven 1er Cru juice. If it's what's in the glass that matters most to you, then this is the wine you want with dinner. Tonight!

Value in the Côte de Nuits?

From the hallowed villages of Vosne-Romanée, Chambolle-Musigny, Gevrey-Chambertin and their assorted neighbors come some of the most expensive wines in the world. These are not places one typically looks for values or insider's secrets. However, there are wines from this neighborhood that deliver the goods at prices that don't require a second mortgage. Not a lot of them, granted, but when we find the good ones, I get very excited to turn you on to them. Here are three that I'm thrilled to drink at home with my friends and family...

Hautes-Côtes de Nuits

A couple of shipments back we introduced you to the *Hautes-Côtes de Beaune* – the upper slopes higher up on the next set of hills above Beaune, Pommard & Volnay. There is a similar appellation further north – the *Hautes Côtes de Nuits*, way up in the wild hills above Nuits, Vougeot, Vosne, Morey & Chambolle.

The high-elevation vineyards up there are more highly variable in quality than their cousins down the hill, but the potential is there in certain parcels for some excellent wines – notably in the hands of the better producers with well-situated parcels. (Are you noticing a theme, perhaps?)

Enter young **Caroline Parent**, daughter of two famous Burgundy producers. (Mom is Anne-Françoise Gros of Vosne-Romanée, and papa is François Parent of Pommard). Caroline launched her own label just three years ago, and has quickly become one of our favorites.



From some family parcels in the Hautes-Côtes above Vosne-Romanée she crafts this lovely example. The **2011 Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits** (\$59 – **CLUB PRICE \$47.20**) is approachable in its youth, but with the staying power to go 3-5 years. It shows good depth of fruit, a wild and spicy streak, and is absolutely perfect with Boeuf Bourguignon or a nice piece of grilled steak. In a word, Yum!



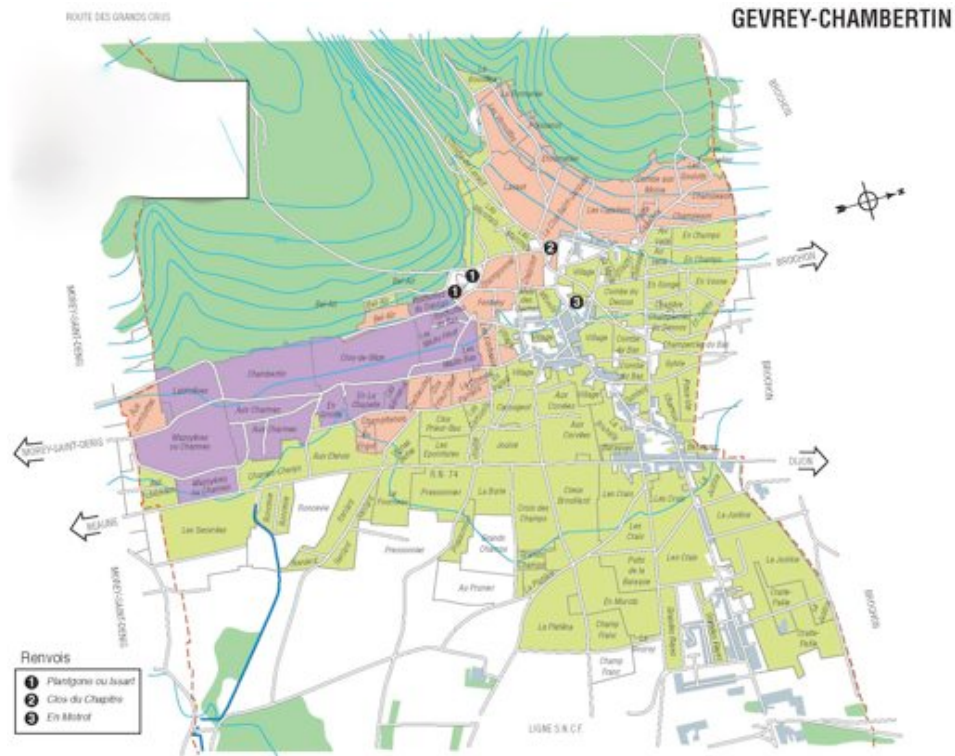
Caroline Parent

Vosne-Romanée Village

Deservedly Burgundy's most famous village, it is home to the legendary Grand Crus of Romanée-Conti, La Tâche, Richebourg and Romanée-St. Vivant and more, including some amazing 1er Cru sites. At the Village level, however, is not really where Vosne-Romanée shines. In fact much of the Village wine labeled as Vosne-Romanée is not really all that special, though most of it is surely overpriced. There are a handful of better Village-level sites in Vosne-Romanée, most of which are owned by the top domaines and are sold at prices that are normally seen only at the 1er Cru level.

Caroline Parent to the rescue once again. Her family has parcels in three of the best Vosne-Romanée Village-level sites. Caroline's wine is a blend of these parcels, and to my palate is one of the better Vosne-Romanée Village bottlings I've ever come across. The **2011 Vosne-Romanée** (\$123 – **CLUB PRICE \$98.40**) shows all the benchmark bright red fruits and spice notes of the appellation, in a silky-textured package that should deliver maximum pleasure from 2016 forward. While certainly not inexpensive – it's a killer wine at the Vosne-Romanée Village level, a place where one normally wouldn't look.

Grand Cru at Village prices?



While of course one will never truly find Grand Cru quality at the price of humble Village wines, you *can* find a Village wine that gives you a glimpse of a Grand Cru and outperforms its Village status by miles.

There are only a few isolated cases in Burgundy in which a piece of vineyard land classified at the Village level directly abuts a Grand Cru. Such is the case with the vineyard called **Clos Prieur** in the village of **Gevrey-Chambertin**. (Clos Prieur is also one of those rare vineyards that has a portion of it classified as Village, and another portion classified as 1er Cru.) Clos Prieur sits directly beneath the **Grand Cru Mazis-Chambertin**, and as such is an ideal location, perhaps the best location there is for a Village-level parcel.



Alexandrine Roy, left, with her mom Régine

Alexandrine Roy is one of Burgundy's rising rock-star winemakers, and we've featured her wines in these packages previously. This time we're thrilled to turn you on to her stunningly beautiful Clos Prieur bottling. **The 2011 Gevrey-Chambertin Clos Prieur** from **Domaine Marc Roy** (\$75 – **CLUB PRICE \$60**) is a serious cut above most Gevrey-Chambertin Village wines, which can tend to be a mixed bag due to the relatively large size of the appellation. This one has a powerful personality – showing deep black fruits, more intensity and concentration, and most importantly a distinct minerality that lifts it up to a whole new level. Certainly not at the level of Grand Cru, but perhaps with a hint of what its neighboring Grand Cru can deliver.



Late fall, after the harvest in Gevrey-Chambertin

Next shipment in the Spring...

Thanks for joining us on our exploration of the great wines of Burgundy! Watch your email for information on our next Burgundy Express shipment coming in the spring, and for arrival and release information on all the yummy Burgs headed our way throughout the year – and of course they'll be available on-line and in our tasting room (**and always at 20% off for Club members!**). All the latest information is always available on our website:

www.scottpaul.com

Attention Champagne Fans and **Oregon Pinot Fans!** *If you have not done so already, check out our new Champagne Club and the Scott Paul Club. Club membership is limited, and slots are filling up quickly. Contact Kelly Karr at 503-319-5827 or kellykarr@scottpaul.com to secure your membership asap.*