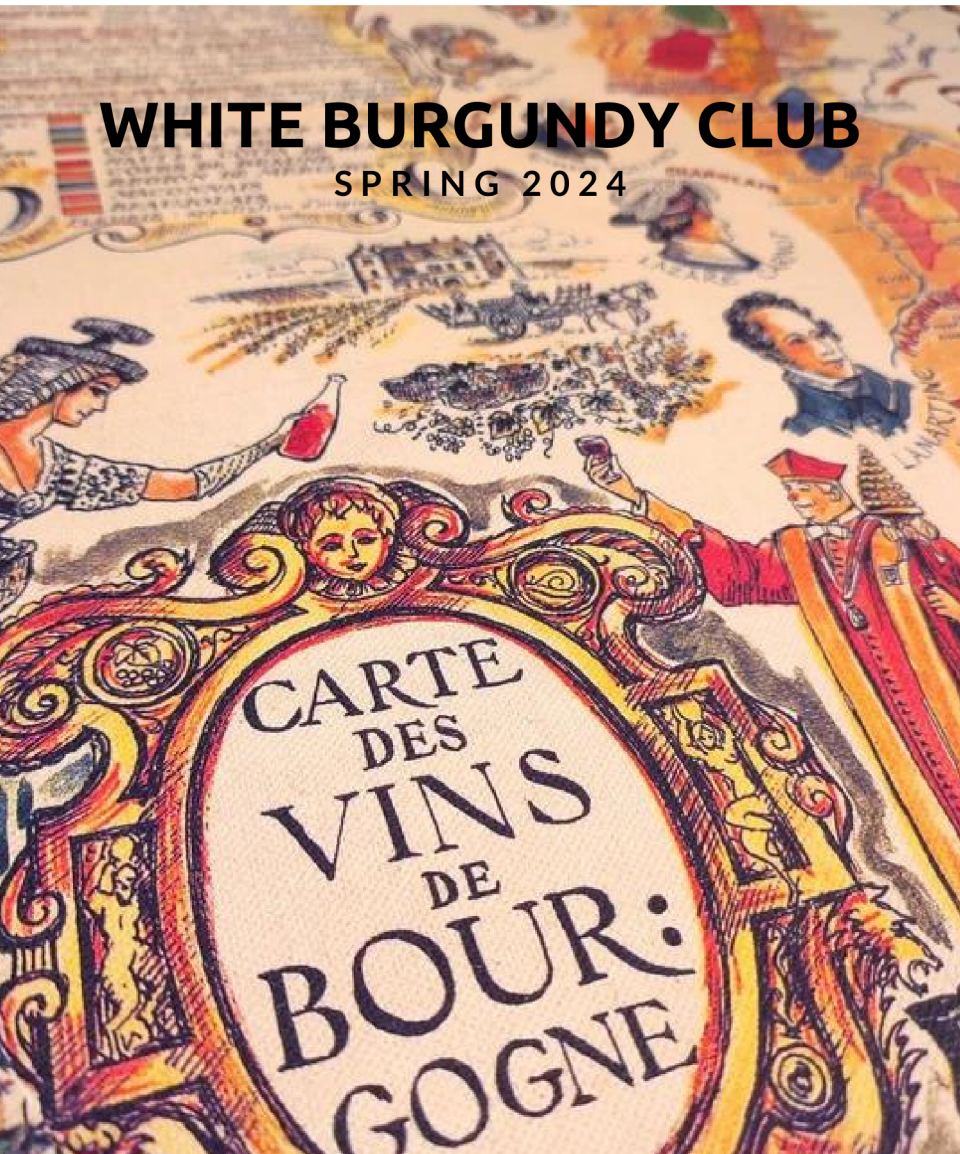




# WHITE BURGUNDY CLUB

SPRING 2024



# AN INTRODUCTION

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We've been asked a hundred times over the years, "When are you going to do a Burgundy club with just white wines?"

True, we've snuck a white wine into our our regular club now and then, but never as a routine. And honestly, we've had a good reason to not do it over the past few years--there was just never enough white wine to be had!

But now, with a couple abundant (and fantastic) vintages on deck, plus the addition of a few new wineries to our portfolio (and more to come), we figured that the time was right to make good on a promise.



We made the decision on the same day we had visited Michel Mallard and Joannès Violot-Guillemard. (each with a wine represented in this edition. Over dinner in Beaune at Maison Colombier that evening, we looked at each other and agreed that it had been a surprisingly great white wine day, and it was time to start to organize some of those small production gems into a bi-annual subscription box.

The whole idea of the club will be to provide you access to some of the more limited white bottlings from our winemakers that we can get our hands on.

Included in this first 6-pack will be a pair of premier cru Chablis, old vine wines from Puligny-Montrachet and Pouilly-Fuissé, as well two gems from Mallard and Violot-Guillemard.

Enjoy!

# VIOLOT- GUILLEMARD

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When we started working with the estate back in 2005, Joannès Violot-Guillemard was a middle-schooler, terrorizing the vineyard roads on his souped-up Motobike. We've watched him grow up, working alongside his dad Thierry since finishing his viticulture and enology studies. Joannès officially took charge of the domaine and vinified the 2019s on his own, and as of the '19s the label now reads simply "Joannès Violot-Guillemard". That said, the gentle soul and guiding hand of Papa is clearly behind every drop of juice.

In fact, when we visited together at their home this past November, Thierry made his way into the dusty cellar to join the fun, help pour some wine, and add a little commentary of his own.



There is nothing quite like the energy of a 25-year old. Johannes darts in and out of the room, cobwebs dislodging from the ceiling due to his breeze, remembering something he forgot moments earlier, and returning as he had left, empty-handed. It isn't nerves. Joannès is just a jacked up young man.

All that energy translates itself clearly into the Violot-Guillemard wines. It's exactly what we're looking for. A case in point arose later in the same trip while we did some prospecting. We stood around in a drab cellar, with somewhat boring people, and a lineup of wines that were befitting the moment--boring and immemorable.

We talk a lot about looking for the translation of a piece of land into the finished product, but often we forget to take notice of whether the personalities of the two are also in sync.

At Violot-Guillemard they always have been, and seem to continue to be. Joannès is clearly in control, and we look forward to bringing you new creations like the one below over many more years to come.





# HAUTES CÔTE- DE-BEAUNE

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BLANC 'LA FOULOTTE' 2022 ~  
\$42

As we like to do during tastings, we work our way through the reds first, then the whites. And it was from a group of white wines at the very end of the tasting that made us all sit straight up on our stools, and even made Papa Thierry make some kind of sound that intimated, “you got something good going here, son.”

A particular wine that stood out could be considered one of the more humble bottlings Violot makes, at least from a name recognition perspective. It comes from the Hautes Côte-de-Beaune, an area we've become more and more interested in as climate change rears its head, and winemakers search for freshness AND richness.

That's exactly what we have here. It's a bottle that screams Chardonnay, with a ample weight on the palate, but then a sort of tension in the jawline that speaks to a later harvest, and resulting good acidity.

Go ahead, just close your eyes and imagine you're drinkg a Chassagne!



# ALBERT JOLY

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During our last visit, Sylvie Prevost-Joly apologized no less than 3 or 4 times for how small their winery was, and we couldn't quite understand it. She called their place "just a traditional old winery". We're not clear why she was underselling it, because we LOVE these kinds of places where one pulls into the driveway, barely knowing if they've found an actual winery, with little sign of anything grape-related—barrels, presses, tanks. Nothing. The only giveaway was a small pallet jack in the driveway. The rest could have been a small unassuming house on the edge of any of the 32,000 villages in France.



The door of the garage was cracked and we found Sylvie inside, working silently with son Quentin, and brother-in-law Gilles, preparing some other importer's order onto a palette in a clean, well-lit winery. Introductions were made, with very few extra words, and Sylvie invited us to the cellar for a tasting.

Sometimes this is one of our shorter visits, as past conversations mostly tend to let the wines do the talking. But on a brisk fall day, the last in a 3-day holiday weekend, Sylvie, Quentin and Gilles were downright chatty.

The Joly estate totals just 11 acres, all of which is in Puligny. Nearly half of their holdings are in the Bourgogne appellation, with the balance being Village-level parcels. Sadly they have no 1er or Grand Cru.

Sylvie Prevot-Joly took over the estate from her father in 2007, and started estate bottling at that time. Working together with her brother-in-law Gilles, she still sells 80-85% of her fruit to negociants, so the production under the Joly label is quite limited. That will surely change as the reputation of the domaine starts to gather some well-deserved steam.



# PULIGNY- MONTRACHET

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CUVÉE VIEILLES VIGNES 2021 ~  
\$85

Again Sylvie was apologetic, explaining that they don't have the big range of other wineries, focusing on just one grape, and almost exclusively in one village.

But the focus on Puligny is a promise, not a flaw. And the thing being promised at Chez Joly is done exactly right. The farming, the winemaking, the bottling, all of it is on point. A tasting in the Joly cellar is a short class in Puligny Montrachet and is Caveau's one and only example. And that's enough.

Cuvée Vieilles Vignes is a fine and pretty Chardonnay, with a certain tropical whiff, and a lively fresh acidity to wash it down.

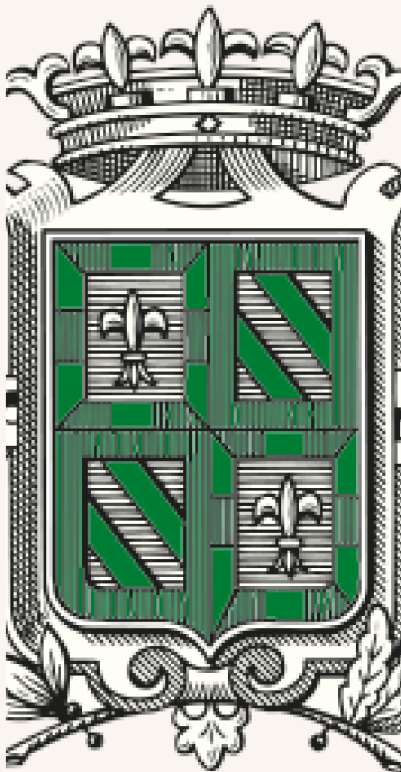
We wish we could have had a glass with our *sûpreme de poulet* later that day at lunch. And further, wish we could have a glass almost every evening, for any old reason...

# DOMAINE RAOUL GAUTHERIN

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During a conversation last fall with Patrick Essa at Buisson-Charles, he recommended we go call on his friend Adrien Gautherin in Chablis. Patrick was recently introduced to Adrien's work, loved it, and thought we might dig it too. So on a cold weekend this past November we trekked north from Beaune and checked in on the 15th generation (!) of this well-regarded family of Chablisienne winemakers.




The GPS took us to the old Gautherin address in the center of Chablis, to an aging, rundown building just around the corner from Au Fils de Zinc—arguably the region's top restaurant. Something didn't feel right, so we checked the address in our email from Nathalie Gautherin that pointed to a winery about 500 meters away from the town center, and just off the main road to Auxerre.

Even though the old winery had been abandoned, the new one, constructed in 2017 and looking more like our own warehouse, was marked on the outside with: "Domaine Raoul Gautherin—since 1585."

Nathalie (the mother) giggled when we brought this up, saying she didn't want her husband and son to put that sign up, but now appreciates the irony. "What we DO is old", she argued. "It doesn't matter WHERE we do it."

The estate is made up of approximately 16 hectares (about 40 acres), and features parcels in 3 Grand Cru and 7 premier Cru sites. In many ways it is an unparalleled collection of vineyards, and is clearly befitting one of the longest-serving families in Chablis.





# CHABLIS

1ER CRU VAILLONS 2022 ~  
\$42

All of the vineyards that make up the Gautherin domaine are old vines, many having been planted in the 50's and 60's by Adrien's grandfather.

In fact there are parcels in 8 named premier cru sites, but Adrien prefers to showcase the best, and dedicate the rest to separate cuvées.

For us, the standouts from were these three small parcels-- Montmains, Mont de Milieu, and this exceptional Vaillons.

For every single one of his Chablis, Adrien does the fermentation with strict control in stainless steel. He believes that fluctuations in temperature during primary and malolactic fermentation are what leads to a loss of complexity in Chablis. So... "inox" it is!

This premier cru Vaillons is what Adrien refers to as a wine that is purely "emblematic of Chablis." Fresh, lively, easy to drink (and love) and redolent of all things one might wish in their Chablis--a whiff of flint, a touch 'o honey, and a long acid tension to finish.

You mouthwatering yet?

# DOMAINE GUEGUEN

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Lots of ink has been spilled describing the most northern part of Burgundy as one of the most distinctive and unique of all the great Chardonnay regions. With its Kimmeridgian and Portlandian soils, wines that feature a limestone-driven minerality, and its singular focus on one grape, we can only be in one place on the planet--the incomparable Burgundy region of Chablis.

It is all elegant, beautifully appointed, and simply fantastic. Just like the Gueguen lineup of glorious Chablis.



Céline Gueguen very literally bounds from her office when you appear for a tasting, greets you like an old friend, and offers a kind smile as if suggesting this will not be your first and only visit.

The French call this an *accueil chaleureux*--a warm welcome.

And then Frédéric arrives on the scene, a crooked smile offering similar warmth, a vigorous *poignée à main*, and altogether you are escorted through their space. There in the center of Chablis, in a brand new location for the Gueguens, this Chardonnay power couple is providing the goods.

While we tasted at the domaine in November we asked Fred if he had a personal favorite among his 1er Crus - normally a question that most *vignerons* won't answer, or they'll answer with a "I love all my children equally" vibe. And just as he answered in years past, he responded again with a nod to Vaillons. He loves the purity and energy the vineyard delivers, and we wholeheartedly agree.

Who's going to open this one AND the Gautherin at the same time to compare? What's similar? What's different??



# CHABLIS

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'1ER CRU VAILLONS 2022 ~  
\$49

Gueguen is a "big little" winery, meaning that 36 hectares of vines does not translate to an overstocked, over-produced lineup of wine that borders on très commerciale. Instead, one can taste from premier cru parcels that are 40 ares, 70 ares, and 20 ares in size (backyard gardens). Each of these result in just a few thousand bottles produced per year.

This Vaillons bottling comes from one of Gueguen's smallest holdings, and is our one and only shot from ANY of their Premier Crus from the painfully stingy 2021 vintage.

In fact, this bottling actually doesn't exist, not to be found even on the Gueguen website.

Our prized allocation--60 bottles of a profoundly beautiful 1er Cru Chablis. You might think of Vaillons as having the richness of Vosgros, and something approaching the tension of Vaucopin.

Any way you slice it though, this is classic Chablis through and through.



# MICHEL MALLARD

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Michel Mallard greeted us with a serious look, grim pursed lips, and positioned himself face to face with Scott, maybe 10 inches apart at the nose. We have a problem, he explained. Things are no good.

Was Mallard going out of business? Or worse, had they found a national US importer??!! None of the above thankfully. This particular crisis had to do with his village-level wines of Aloxe-Corton, Chorey-lès-Beaune, Ladoix, and more. There will be none, Michel explained, until I release the 2021's next summer. So, you will only be able to buy the premier cru and grand cru wines today Scott. I'm sorry.



This was last November, and we've patiently waited 9 months to tell that story, and to release this wine. Like many of the '21s, it is a wine that is classic and magical--a refined, gorgeous example of why pinot noir remains the pinnacle of greatness in the red wine world.

Michel Mallard is one of those magicians, blessed with nice chunks of four of the greatest Grand Crus on the storied Hill of Corton, as well as plum sites in the surrounding villages of Ladoix, Chorey-lès-Beaune, and Aloxe-Corton.

Michel jointly runs the estate with his father Patrick, which is named for Michel's grandfather. Michel makes the wines, and he has an interesting side-hustle - he's also the winemaker for the revered Domaine d'Eugénie in Vosne-Romanée.

Caveau disciples that have traveled to Burgundy with us always comment that a tasting at Chez Mallard is the highlight of their trip. A LOT of bottles are opened over the course of three hours, and that little spittoon just doesn't do the trick!

A man with glasses and a blue shirt is shown in profile, looking down at something in his hands, likely a grape. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist. The background is a blurred vineyard.

# LADOIX

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1ER CRU LES GRÉCHONS 2020 ~  
\$65

Seriously, folks. Don't tell anyone - 'cause the only 60 bottles that exist in the US are right here in this club pack.

Les Gréchons is a tiny parcel at the top of the Corton hill, adjacent to the Grand Cru zone, and it completely rocked our world during our visit to Michel's cellar in November.

This vintage is more focused on aromas of peaches and pears and citrus fruits, with a whiff of hazelnuts as well. In the mouth it's intense and precise and impressively long.

Very "Meursault-like" in flavor profile, with maybe a touch of baby-Charlemagne underneath?

It behaves like a wine from more "exalted" origins, and for the price, we don't think it can be beat.

# DOMAINE THIBERT

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Working alongside his sister Sandrine, Christophe Thibert is the mind behind their winery, taking the reins from their parents in 1991. Thirty years of winemaking and experimentation with the mono-cépage Chardonnay has given Christophe a wealth of knowledge on the subject.

It was in 2010 that Christophe, along with the other owners of prime parcels in Pouilly-Vinzelles made the application for 1er Cru status for their Les Longeays vineyard. It was finally granted in 2022, and from now on will be noted as such on the label.



To show Chardonnay's varying shapes and sizes, Christophe produces a range of approximately 15 wines each year, from the simple and tasty Macon bottlings (coming to you in about a month), all the way through to the cellar-aged Pouilly-Fuissé and Pouilly-Vinzelles that we're offering you today.

The Thibert house style has always been to hold their wines until they deem them ready to release and drink. This Chardonnay has benefitted mightily from 5 years in the cold Thibert cellar and today is in peak form, and should continue that way in your own cellar for, who knows, another 5-10 years?

During our last visit with Christophe and Sandrine, they brought in a local chef that was in the middle of testing recipes and competing in the MOF--Meilleurs Ouvriers de France. They thought it would be an interesting way to taste their wines, with someone trying to earn the title of best craftsman in France.

Well first, yes, it was a remarkable way to taste the Thibert lineup. But upon further reflection, tasting the Thibert lineup is already a masterclass--in Chardonnay.

And Christophe Thibert is a craftsperson at the top of his game.





## POUILLY-FUISSÉ

1ER CRU LES CRAS 2018~  
\$55

During our last visit, Christophe waxed poetic for awhile about the 2018 vintage, calling it one of those dream years to introduce people to white Burgundy. agree!ee! It is a vintage that is sure to please. The wines are rich, complex, and loaded with character. Classic white burgundy through and through.

This bottle comes from three parcels in tiny sub-sections of Les Cras, on stony limestone and chalky soils. The burst of gunflint on the nose makes you think of Chablis, and then the unctuous palate of honey and spice notes remind you of parts of the southern half of Meursault. But I wouldn't call it a "fatty" Chardonnay, instead I find it persistently fresh and harmonious throughout.

It is amazingly complete and complex, and the balance between the fruit and the minerality is spot on, with a neat whiff of cardamom and white pepper rounding it out.

With the above mentioned gourmet lunch, this was the bottle several of us returned to again and again.

Simply gorgeous.

# THE LAST DROP

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Thanks for joining us on our exploration of the great white wines of Burgundy!

Watch your email for information on our next Caveau Burgundy Club shipment coming in fall 2024, and for pre-arrival offerings on all the magnificent Bubbliies and Burgundies headed your way throughout the year. All the latest information is always available on our website:

[www.CaveauSelections.com](http://www.CaveauSelections.com)

Care to join us in Champagne or Burgundy next year? Please drop us a line if you're interested!

[orders@caveauselections.com](mailto:orders@caveauselections.com)

Enjoy!