

FLINT WINES

Flint Wines Ltd, 38 De Laune Street
Kennington, London SE17 3UR
Tel: 0207 582 2500 Fax: 0207 582 2210
www.flintwines.com

2008 Burgundy Offer

A short holiday in a normally drought-like part of the Languedoc followed by a few days relaxing rather than working in Burgundy in early June (2008) seemed like a perfect way to enjoy some gorgeous summer sunshine in wonderful surroundings. How wrong I was. Two days of monsoon-like rain in the south were followed by grey skies further north and temperatures barely into double figures. Yet, here we are, 18 months on, feeling *very* bullish about the wines that were born from such inauspicious weather. They are really terrific.

Deciding when to pick is never a straightforward task yet in 2008 most growers had their minds made up for them by the climatic conditions. As August drew to a close the grapes were some way off being ripe but the forecast was optimistic and growers could wait comfortable in the knowledge that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. And boy, did they gain! Right on cue the north wind arrived, drying the bunches and removing much of the risk of rot (ironically the cooler temperatures had previously prevented the spread of rot as rot needs both moisture *and* warmth). The sun shone, the light was bright and the grapes journeyed on strongly towards maturation in ideal conditions. In fact the north wind continued to blow drying out the grapes themselves and concentrating both the juice and the components inside them.

Picking began around the 24th September and for some growers continued well into October. Quantities were down, due in the main to the effects of the wind, although careful selection in both the vineyards and the cuverie played its part, too. The gradual progress towards full phenolic ripeness as opposed to a dramatic, heat-induced rapid rising of the sugar levels played a big part in shaping the style of the wines, especially the reds. The initially high malic acid levels also played a crucial role in the evolution of the wines in barrel. These high levels were compounded by the severe cold of the winter and quite often the malo-lactic fermentation (the natural conversion of astringent malic acid into softer lactic acid) that usually follows shortly after the alcoholic fermentation, did not finish until the early autumn. This is not a bad thing for the wine, in fact it can be considered to have a positive affect (a slow malo fixes the colour better, for example) but it does make assessing the wines more difficult in the early stages of their lives. It also means that the changes every month post malo are more dramatic.

We tasted various wines between April and September but only really began evaluating the wines properly between the beginning of October and early December and even in that time the development of the wines was both significant and exciting. At the end of October we were very pleased with the quality of the vintage, by early December we were positively enthused and thrilled by what we had tasted. It's likely that such conditions 20 years ago would have produced a pretty mixed bag of wines but in the hands of today's ambitious and highly talented winemakers this will prove to be, without doubt, a very good vintage indeed. In terms of comparisons, vintages such as 1993 and 2001 were mentioned by growers which bodes very well. When tasting the red wines, their concentration of fruit masked both their acidity and tannic structure but at the end of each day one's mouth was tired, much more so than with the more hedonistic 2007s, suggesting that they have plenty of both. Indeed they may well shut down post bottling and require a degree of patience before they reach full bloom.

The white wines are delightful. They will perhaps drink a little earlier, as they appear to be a mix of 2006 and 2007; more mineral than the 2006s but less taut than the 2007s. They have good purity and don't lack acidity at all but they do have an approachability that will mean at village level they will drink very well in a couple of years time and at 1er and Grand level one will be able to start drinking them in 4 or 5 years time.

Prices are fairly stable, despite often significantly reduced production. We believe so passionately in these wines that we have increased our allocations to the most we could be allowed and we recommend them without hesitation. If we don't invest in them how can we expect you to? We have ordered as many large formats as possible and also put many of the wines in six bottle cases, not necessarily because of limited quantities, but because it enables you to pick and choose the wines you really want. So instead of 12 bottles of 5 different wines you can now order 6 bottles of ten different wines, if you so wish. All wines are offered subject to availability and we may have to allocate certain wines. Obviously, those of you who buy across the board or who bought previous vintages will be in a strong position when it comes to allocating the most sought after wines. And, of course, those who buy the 2008s will be in an equally strong position for the 2009s next year. All prices are quoted ib (in bond).

Domaines Featured

Maconnais:

Château Rontets, Fuissé

Domaine Clos des Rocs, Loché

Chalonnais :

Domaine J-B Ponsot, Rully

Côte de Beaune :

Domaine Bernard Moreau, Chassagne-Montrachet

Domaine Paul Pillot, Chassagne-Montrachet NEW

Domaine Jean-Marc Pillot, Chassagne-Montrachet NEW

Domaine Ballot-Millot, Meursault

Domaine Buisson-Charles, Meursault

Domaine Lafarge, Volnay

Domaine Hubert de Montille, Volnay

Domaine Guiton, Bligny-lès-Beaune

Domaine de Courcel, Pommard

Domaine Lebreuil, Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Bonneau du Martray, Pernand-Vergelesses

Côte de Nuits :

Domaine Henri Gouges, Nuits-St-Georges

Domaine Aurélien Verdet, Hautes Côtes de Nuits

Domaine Jean Tardy, Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Confuron-Cotetidot, Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Jean Grivot, Vosne-Romanée

Domaine Hudelot-Noellat, Vougeot NEW

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod, Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Louis Boillot, Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Arlaud, Morey-St-Denis

Domaine des Lambrays, Morey-St-Denis

Domaine Lucie & Auguste Lignier, Morey-St-Denis

Dujac Fils & Père, Morey-St-Denis

Domaine Gilles Duroché, Gevrey-Chambertin NEW

Domaine Pierre Damoy, Gevrey-Chambertin

Domaine Jean Fournier, Marsannay

Domaine Bernard Coillot, Marsannay

White Wines

Château Rontets, Fuissé

Not only do Fabio Montrasi and his wife Claire make wonderful wine from this small (6.5 hectares) but beautiful estate, perched above the village of Fuissé, but last year they played hosts to an invasion of naked people, who descended on their vineyards to be photographed by the renowned Spencer Tunick to highlight the importance of climate change (google 'naked people in vineyard' for various interesting shots and videos from the day!). Looking at the images on the internet when we returned from our recent trip was a surreal experience, especially as it was a freezing cold, windy autumnal day when we visited and stood amongst the same vines discussing the quality of the 2008 harvest! Fabio and Claire make sumptuous Pouilly-Fuissé that blends the richness of the region's wines with the minerality of their own vineyards. We buy the Pierrefolle cuvée which is from a small single vineyard on the other side of the house and it captures this balance perfectly.

2008 Pouilly-Fuissé 'Pierrefolle'

£195ib/12

The vines here are 35 years old and this shows plenty of rich, buttery, spicy fat on the nose before the minerality kicks in on the mouth. It has a fullness of fruit but also very good bite and extract of which lifts the flavours. Excellent weight on the finish and very good length. A top notch example. Drink from 2011

Domaine Clos des Rocs, Loché

Olivier Giroux is one of the most passionate and honest winemakers we have met. If he's not happy with one of his wines he won't hesitate to tell you and his standards are very high!. The beauty of such an approach is the continual improvement in winemaking even when you think that a wine is already as good as it could be. It's also exciting when you recognise how pleased he is with what he has made. Tasting through his 2008s back in October one couldn't fail to be impressed with his range and one got the impression that even Olivier was relatively satisfied!

Oliver bought the domaine just a few years ago. With his father still running the family domaine and his elder brother first in line to succeed him, he took the brave decision to go it alone, albeit only two miles up the road! He bought a superb estate, a real sleeping giant, owned by an elderly winemaker, whose own son has no interest in taking over the estate. Blessed with some great parcels and lots of old vines, it just needed someone with ambition and determination to turn it around and Olivier was clearly that man.

He combines his use of stainless steel and oak barrels and is reluctant to overoak his wines as he wants them to express their minerality, which makes sense when you have vines close on 100 years old. These are serious wines from a serious winemaker, who will soon be one of the most sought after names in the Maconnais. He puts plenty of Côte d'Or producers to shame!

2008 Maçon Loché

£79ib/12

This is a pretty impressive Maçon. It sees some oak (40% but not new) and some stainless steel. It has terrific richness yet also a real bite to offset its deliciously ripe, rounded fruit flavours. It should drink really well for the next 4 or 5 years. Drink from late 2010

2008 Pouilly Loché 'En Chantone'

£126ib/12

The vines here are a whopping 95 years old and yields are terribly low at 20 hectolitres per hectare. Clearly very concentrated, it has a lovely texture and purity but it will need a little time to evolve. Impressive potential. Drink from 2012

2008 Pouilly Loché 'Clos des Rocs No 2'

£134ib/12

These two Clos des Rocs Lochés are exactly the same juice from the same parcel of old vines. For the first time ever Olivier decided to vinify a portion completely in stainless steel and the rest in oak, a third of which was new. It is purely their 'élevage' which has made all the difference. Both are stunning; you must decide which style you prefer, if you don't want some of both, of course! This example has great extract on the finish and a huge fruit concentration without any sense of heaviness whatsoever. There is some spice, great purity and mouthwatering length. Lots to come, too. Drink from 2012

2008 Pouilly Loché 'Clos des Rocs Monopole

£134ib/12

This has lovely fragrance and noteworthy freshness, which is interesting. Lots of flavour and character and wonderfully concentrated, with the oak perfectly integrated. Again a mere baby but full of promise. Drink from 2012

2008 Pouilly Fuissé 'Clos des Rocs'

£138ib/12

The vines here are 80 years old and again Olivier has used one third new oak. It is perhaps fleshier than the Loché but no more concentrated. As with the wines above there is so much more to come. Drink from 2012

Domaine Jean-Baptiste Ponsot, Rully

Energetic Jean-Baptiste Ponsot has quickly established himself as one of the new stars of his village and 2008 is another step forward for him. He manages to get lots of character into his wines yet retain excellent vibrancy and purity. If you're looking for some great value alternatives to the grander names a few miles up the road these wines are a must.

Whites

2008 Rully Blanc

£106ib/12

Along with the Bourgogne Blanc from Alex Moreau this is undoubtedly one of the best value wines on this offer. It has a real vivacity about it and is as clean as a whistle. It will be the perfect aperitif wine or a very stylish accompaniment to grilled fish. Drink as soon as we've shipped it!

2008 Rully 1^{er} Cru Molesme

£128ib/12

This is richer and fuller as you might expect, but again there is good freshness when the acidity kicks in nicely on the finish. Aged in both stainless steel and oak, a small proportion of which is new, it has a touch of spice and lime and plenty of fat. If this proves to be better than the gorgeous 2006, which it might, it will be superb. Drink from 2011

Red

2008 Rully 1er Cru La Fosse

£124ib/12

Hints of strawberry cream on the nose of this small cuvée (less than 150 cases were made). There is good structure and some punch to the palate which support some quite fine-featured fruits. This is very attractive and shows the real progress Jean-Baptiste has made with his red wines in a very short space of time. Good value, too. Drink from late 2011

Domaine Bernard Moreau & Fils, Chassagne-Montrachet

2007 seems to have been the vintage where Alex and his brother Benoit officially joined the big league. Of course, we have long been impressed by their wines so it was exciting to see the critics really being wowed by them. In fairness Alex has raised the quality in recent years, extending the *élevage* considerably in an effort to get greater minerality, finesse and length into the wines. These 2008s reflect that change, even in a vintage that tends more towards the fruit than 2007. And, as always, prices are more than reasonable and his 'simple' Bourgogne is arguably the best value white wine on this entire list. A superb range that deserves your closest attention. For the first time ever, Alex made a barrel of Bâtard but you may well have to bribe us (or at least lavish high quality chocolate cake on us) to get you hands on some (300 bottles for the whole world is not very much!)

2008 Bourgogne Blanc

£99ib/12

We can't buy enough of this wine. It's a mini Chassagne for a fraction of the price and is just delightful. It's wonderfully fleshy yet clean and vibrant and dangerously moreish. Drink from late 2010

2008 Saint-Aubin 1^{er} Cru Sur Gamay

£180ib/12

From the 1^{er} Cru that over-looks the village of Gamay (hence the name!), this is quite rich and rounded and should drink relatively early. Drink from 2011

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet

£205ib/12 or £212ib/6 mags

Terrific richness of fruit and excellent concentration here. The balance is so good it seems almost drinkable already but it would be a shame to polish it off too early as there are interesting underlying flavours still to emerge. Drink from 2011

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Maltroie

£325ib/12

This tends to be the most seductive of the various 1ers Crus here and this 2008 is no exception. Full of rich, supple, spicy fruit flavours with nice freshness and harmony. Impossible to not like this wine. Drink from 2012

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Vergers

£325ib/12

This is more on the mineral, austere (in a good way!) side showing delicious bite and vitality. It's very stylish with good length and sense of place. Drink from 2013

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Morgeot

£335ib/12

Morgeot is by far and away the largest 1er Cru in Chassagne and often the least inspiring but this is arguably the best Morgeot Alex has ever made. Typically citrussy and fresh with rich fruit flavours but there seems to be extra depth and intensity here and also very good length. Impressive. Drink from 2013

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Ruchottes

£205ib/6 or £212ib/3 mags

This is everything you would expect from old vines from such a good vineyard. Much the youngest wine of the range but its intensity is very evident and there is great underlying harmony. Given time, this will be a cracker. Drink from 2014

Domaine Paul Pillot, Chassagne-Montrachet

NEW

We didn't go looking for new Chassagne producers because we were unhappy with Alex's wines, far from it, they have never been better, it's just we never had enough to go round so we needed another source. And boy, did we get lucky! Thierry Pillot, good friends with Alex, took over from his father about 6 years ago, and an already top notch estate has now moved even further along the quality curve. The immediately likeable and relaxed Thierry has that air of someone who knows what he is doing; his innate confidence in his abilities reflected in the sureness of his winemaking.

Anyone with a love of fine white Burgundy should be buying these wines. They are mineral, poised, complex and vibrant and all wonderfully expressive of their differing terroirs. They were so good back in November they even managed to make a huge impression on Sam, who was in the process of being struck down with chronic food poisoning, so much so he had to forgo the superb tasting at Dujac that followed! It's hard to say which wines you should buy as they are all fantastic!

2008 St Aubin 1^{er} Cru Charmois

£172ib/12

Definitive St Aubin whose minerality has elements of Puligny about it. It has structure, length and precision and plenty of pure, vibrant, refined fruit flavours. Drink from 2011.

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet

£215ib/12

Thierry makes 2 village Chassagnes. This one is a blend of various parcels and is designed to drink earlier than the other. It has lovely, rounded flavours and, although open and inviting, good freshness and balance. Drink from 2011

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 'Mazures'

£250ib/12

Mazures is arguably the top village site in Chassagne and Thierry is right to bottle this parcel separately. It's finer and more mineral with excellent control and structure. Concentrated, long and beautifully balanced, it's wonderfully mouthwatering and rather complex for a village wine. Drink from 2012.

2008 Puligny-Montrachet 'Les Enseignères'

£250ib/12

If Mazures is the top Chassagne parcel then Enseignères is the top Puligny parcel at this level, lying just below the Grands Crus. Only 80 cases of this wine are made, sadly, and it wins you over instantly with its classy, complex nose. It's rich yet has great harmony and impressive length (the vines here are old) and retains the desired delicacy of a true Puligny. Drink from 2012.

2008 Meursault 'Les Charrons'

£235ib/12

This is wonderfully chalky and mineral for a Meursault, but once again Charrons is well located. Excellent bite, very stylish and quite delicious. Drink from 2012.

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Grand Montagne

£325ib/12

This vineyard reaches up towards the rocks and its stony, chalky character produces a wine teeming with minerality and bite. This has terrific elegance and balance and really makes the palate tingle. This is about as far removed from an Aussie Chardonnay as one could imagine and it's lovely! Drink from 2013.

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Champains

£325ib/12

The soil here is richer and heavier with more clay and consequently the wine is fuller and rounder than the previous wine. It's broader, more masculine with excellent dry extract and structure. There is power but it's neither excessive nor heavy. A delightful contrast to the Grand Montagne. Drink from 2013.

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Caillerets

£345ib/12 or £352ib/6 mags

Thierry is rumored to make the best Caillerets in the village, although his cousin Jean-Marc Pillot might have something to say about that (his version, see below, is also fabulous)! It possesses that magical mix of fruit power and minerality. It's rich yet beautifully clean and pure with superb bite and extract. You can almost taste the stones! Great example. Drink from 2014

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Ruchottes

£345ib/12 or £352ib/6 mags

This is impressively concentrated with excellent weight of fruit and intensity. Again there is good dry extract and imposing length. Lots of potential here. Drink from 2014

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru La Romanée

£208ib/6 or £215ib/3 mags

We're closing in on Grand Cru quality here. You taste the Caillerets and the Ruchottes and wonder how things can get better than that but with this they do. It's very serious. If you mixed the Ruchottes and Caillerets together and added 10% more of everything this is what you would get. Great intensity and purity. Drink from 2015

2008 Puligny-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Folatières

£250ib/6 or £256ib/3 mags

On the nose this has almost a salty minerality about it which is delightful. In the mouth it's rich and structured with high quality underlying fruit. Folatières is a very fine vineyard and this is a very fine example. Drink from 2014

Domaine Jean-Marc Pillot, Chassagne-Montrachet

NEW

A couple of years ago Allen Meadows (Burghound), when reviewing Jean-Marc Pillot's 2006s, noted that 'he continues to demonstrate why he is a rising star in Chassagne.' His subsequent fantastic 2007s and now his impressive 2008s, merely confirm that his star has risen; and this in a village that is bursting with energy and young, raw talent. We didn't want to miss out so we have taken up a small selection of J-M's wines, which we believe add further depth to our list. Jean-Marc makes quite a wide range of crus and we chose the three that really knocked our socks off. They are each brilliant examples of their terroir and impressed us with their individuality, personality and sheer high quality.

2008 Montagny 1^{er} Cru Les Gareses

£165ib/12

When we went to taste at Jean-Marc's we weren't expecting to taste possibly the best Montagny we had ever tasted but that's what happened. The vines here are a staggering 100 years old and give the innate concentration and purity of fruit that Jean-Marc allows to flourish. There is no new oak and the minerality is terrific. Lovely wine. Drink from 2011

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Baudines

£172ib/6

Baudines is not a vineyard one sees too regularly and even Jean-Marc only makes 900 bottles! This has very good weight and liveliness. It has a real crystalline, stony quality that accentuates its minerality and length. Very nicely put together indeed. Mouthwatering. Drink from 2013.

2008 Chassagne-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Caillerets

£178ib/6

This is very much on the racy, lively, mineral side of the equation and beautifully so. It has excellent concentration, length, purity and subtle weight but it's the vitality and incision of it that really excite. Another very fine Caillerets. Drink from 2014.

Domaine Buisson-Charles, Meursault

Patrick Essa, Michel Buisson's son in law, now looks after the winemaking at his wife, Catherine's, small family domaine and he is doing a fine job, winning consistently great reviews from the likes of Allen Meadows (Burghound). Robert Parker described it as 'one of the finest domaines in Burgundy that few wine lovers have ever heard of' and Clive Coates recently highlighted it 'as very good source of (white Burgundy) and it's getting better!'

The domaine consists of several well-placed village plots as well as various 1^{er} Crus. In style the wines tend to be quite traditional, in the sense that they are rich and full yet require time to come round. New oak is administered cautiously, Patrick preferring the wines to express their innate character in their own time. Prices here are exceptionally reasonable, especially for such well regarded wines.

2008 Meursault Vieilles Vignes

£215ib/12

This is from a couple of parcels of old vines, including one of 90 years of age. It sees only about 20% new oak and shows plenty of intensity without being showy. There is good meaty Meursault character and also good limey bite alongside. Needs a bit of time in the cellar but full of promise. Drink from 2012

2008 Meursault 'Les Tessons'

£295ib/12

Tessons is one of those sites in Meursault that flirts with being a 1^{er} Cru and in many examples is certainly up to the job. For now, it remains, officially, a mere village lieu dit but an exceptionally good one. This shows more minerality than the Vieilles Vignes but plenty of underlying concentration. Again the new oak is minimal and there is very good length and vibrancy. Drink from 2013

2008 Meursault 1^{er} Cru Bouchères

£185ib/6

We didn't manage to get our hands on any of this last year but this time we have been more successful. This is quite delicate for a Meursault with a nice mix of florality and minerality. The emphasis here is very much on length and vitality. Drink from 2014

2007 Meursault 1^{er} Cru Charmes

£185ib/6

Unsurprisingly, this is more exuberant than the Bouchères, especially on the nose and there is real fat in the mouth. However, there is also good control and poise and very good balance. Lots to come. Drink from 2014

2007 Meursault 1^{er} Cru La Goutte d'Or

£195ib/6

This is the most backward, structured and powerful of the range and in that sense is very Meursault. There is a bit more spice and more 'matière' but again the oak is well harmonised and the finish is fresh and very long. Drink from 2015

Domaine Ballot-Millot, Meursault

Young Charles Ballot (all winemakers seem young these days; they're our version of police officers!) took over from his father Philippe, a few years ago now and has made assured progress into a very accomplished winemaker indeed. For the record he is also a very good person to sit next to at the annual Meursault Paulée as he spends most of the evening pulling corks under the table on various magnums from his cellar and one's glass never remotely runs dry!

With his white wines he is looking for finesse and minerality, which he certainly achieves, especially in the cuvées we buy. He has some very good vineyards of Chardonnay and really makes the most of them. In the last couple of years he has also upgraded his reds quite dramatically. He has several different appellations in his portfolio but not much of any of them. We have picked just a few that really stood out.

Whites

2008 Meursault 'Narvaux'

£240ib/12

Charles makes three village Meursaults and this is by far and away the stand out, which is perhaps not surprising given the quality and reputation of Narvaux, which lies just around the 1ers Crus. The stony character of the soil really come through in the wine and there is a toned, vibrant minerality that runs right through this and lifts the subtle yet concentrated fruit flavours. This will need a little time but is full of potential. Drink from 2012

2008 Meursault 1^{er} Cru Genevrières

£198ib/6 or £205ib/3 mags

We tasted this wine after the exuberant Charmes and it was much tighter and more angular yet it seemed to have more underlying matter and potential and given time we're sure its extra complexity and depth of flavour will win through. The vineyard lies in the heart of the 1^{er} Crus and this is a nice mix of the typical Meursault richness and the minerality inherent in Charles' wines. Drink from 2013

2008 Meursault 1^{er} Cru Les Perrières

£198ib/6 or £205ib/3 mags

This is the most mineral of the 1ers Crus in Meursault and Charles certainly brings out that quality in this example. There is excellent purity and grip and a lovely raciness not always seen in this appellation. Composed, long and complex, this will be lovely. Drink from 2014.

Reds

2008 Beaune 1er Cru Epenottes

£235ib/12

This is not a grand wine but it's impressive in its class and is a very fine example of what it should be. It has the earthiness of a Pommard (the vineyard lies next to Pommard 1er Cru Epenots) but it's prettier, more fragrant and more delicate. The tannins are quite fine for a Beaune and there is plenty of sweet, red fruit. Very good value. Drink from 2012

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Taillepièdes

£148ib/6

The vines here have some age and the wine shows nice concentration and richness. There is both oak and fruit spice and stylish supporting tannins. Again this offers very good value for a Taillepièdes. Drink from 2013

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Rugiens

£178ib/6

The pick of Charles' reds by some margin in 2008. It has all the power one expects from a Rugiens but also very good definition, finesse and purity. There is length and depth of flavour, too. Drink from 2015

Domaine Bonneau du Martray, Pernand Vergelesses

Jean-Charles le Bault de la Morinière has run this exemplary estate since 1994 and continues to produce amongst the very best Corton Charlemagne. His is the only domaine in Burgundy to sell only Grand Cru wine; his Corton Charlemagne, of which he has a whopping 9.5 hectares, and a red Corton. Coates describes his CC as 'one of the very greatest (white wines) in all Burgundy'.

2008 Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

£395ib/6 or £402ib/3 mags

Another belter from BDM. More overt fruit than there was at this stage in the 2007 but still the tell-tale raciness of this unique cru. Loads of length and real complexity. Drink from 2105

Red Wines – Côte de Beaune

Domaine Lebreuil, Savigny-lès-Beaune

Charming Jean-Baptiste Lebreuil has proved to be a real find for us. His older wines are lapped up by some of London's top restaurants whilst his en primeur offerings are tucked away by shrewd collectors looking for stylish, pure, good value Burgundies to drink in the mid-term. J-B's philosophy is to make wines that stay true to both Pinot Noir and his vineyards. They are all about finesse and purity of fruit and not about power and extraction which is just what we like!

2008 Savigny-lès-Beaune 'Aux Grands Liards'

£138ib/12

Grands Liards is perhaps the best village vineyard in Savigny, sitting just below the 1ers Crus and the vines here are 50 years old. This has a very scented, fragrant nose and a strong fruit attack in the mouth. The subtle structure and fine tannins show on the finish and should ensure that this ages very gracefully. Drink from 2013

2008 Savigny-lès-Beaune 1^{er} Cru Serpentières**£186ib/12**

The vines here are 85 years old but sadly production is always tiny and in 2008 it was even smaller than usual with just 2 barrels being made! Luckily we get the lion's share so don't panic! This is wonderfully aromatic with a lovely sweetness and plumpness of pure fruit. Nicely textured with good structure underneath. Impressive. Drink from 2013

2008 Savigny-lès-Beaune 1^{er} Cru Les Peuillets**£186ib/12**

This is a very different animal, being much more backward and less instantly charming but it has the potential to be very good. More masculine with more overt structure there is excellent weight here and good length. One to lay down. Drink from 2014

Domaine Guiton, Bligny-lès-Beaune (Volnay)

Charming Guillaume Guiton is a good friend of Alex Moreau (who isn't?!); in fact when we visited him on a Monday morning in November he was recovering from an indulgent weekend with AM, amongst others. It was Alex who pointed us in his direction and we are grateful for the recommendation. Thoughtful, very genuine and clearly not untalented, Guillaume makes wines with a similar philosophy to Jean-Baptiste above. His wines are pure, expressive, very Pinot and quite delightful. They are also very good value.

In 2008 some of Guillaume's malos were quite late in finishing and the wines had only just begun to resemble the finished article but they showed bags of promise, even amongst some of the less fashionable appellations.

2008 Beaune 1^{er} Cru Les Sizies**£135ib/12**

This is a cracking little wine. Quite linear in style with excellent focus, good balance, nice tannin and weight and a charming silky texture. Cool, pure fruit flavours and good length. Drink from 2012

2008 Pernand-Vergelesses 1^{er} Cru Les Vergelesses**£170ib/12**

More backward than usual thanks to the late malo but the tannins are looking very good and the wine should evolve very nicely into its usual refined self, bursting with understated character. Drink from 2012

2008 Aloxe Corton**£190ib/12**

Possibly the best Aloxe Guillaume has made. It has none of the rusticity so often associated with the appellation, in fact it has excellent fruit intensity, strong layers and flavours and stylish balance. A mini revelation. Drink from 2012

2008 Volnay 'Les Petits Poisots'**£180ib/12**

Typically the wine of the range, although this year more difficult to assess due to its late malo. Quite powerful and less charming than the 2007 but possibly more concentrated and with good structure on the finish. May need a little more time than usual but plenty of promise. Drink from 2013

Domaine Hubert de Montille, Volnay

This is currently one of the most exciting and dynamic domaines in Burgundy. Etienne and his sister Alix have expanded its holdings enormously over the past five years with a series of ambitious purchases that have strengthened their holdings in their native Volnay, added superb parcels (both red and white) in Corton and brought in some enviable plots in the Côte de Nuits, including some much-prized Malconsorts. When we went to taste back in November the pressure was on to improve on what was a mind blowing tasting the previous year of their 2007s. However, we were not disappointed, despite the wines being less showy and more backward, as once again there very fine tannins and a delightful classicism that is so typical of this domaine.

Historically, the de Montille wines have always been good, you just had to wait a long time before they came round but surely the progress made over the past decade has seen the wines reach a new level. They have purity, depth, complexity, a sense of place and longevity. What more do you need? Co-incidentally, in the evening of the day of our tasting, whilst dining at Ma Cuisine in Beaune, a friend served us blind a superb bottle of their 1999 Volnay Mitans, which was such a pleasure after an over extracted Dugat wine. It tasted like it was no more than four of five years old and had so much still to offer. If these current wines, and in particular these 2008s, do indeed prove to be of a higher quality then we are all in for a real treat!

Whites**2008 Beaune 1^{er} Cru Aigrots****£255ib/12**

Alix has done a terrific job with this well-sited Beaune producing a wine with lots of rich, ripe fruit flavours yet clean as a whistle. There is fat and a good structure and plenty of character. You would do well to find a better white Beaune than this. Drink from 2011

2008 Meursault 'Les Narvaux du dessous'**£299ib/12**

This is a new wine for the domaine, from a recently bought plot on the lower part of the Narvaux vineyard. It has all the purity and minerality one expects from Narvaux but with the fat that comes from the richer soils of the lower section. This is a very good village wine indeed. Drink from 2011

2008 Puligny-Montrachet 1^{er} Cru Les Caillerets**£354ib/6 or £372ib/3 mags**

Caillerets is one of the great plots of Puligny, lying just along from Montrachet itself on the same slope. There is the weight of serious wine here but it retains a beautiful piercing minerality that shouts Puligny. Lovely. Drink from 2012

2008 Corton Charlemagne

£360ib/6 or £379ib/3 mags

This is perhaps not quite as awesome as the 2007 but that is a bit like saying Rooney is not quite as good as Ronaldo. Who cares, they're both great. This has quickly become a must buy wine each vintage so please take note! Pitch it against the BDM version in a few years time and see who comes out on top. We'll be happy to pop round and help you decide! Drink from 2014

Reds – Côte de Beaune

2008 Beaune 1^{er} Cru Sizies

£250ib/12

We realise that this is expensive for a Beaune 1er Cru (though not as expensive as the Grèves!) but when we recently pulled the cork on the 2005 we couldn't dispute that it was worth it. In theory this is the most accessible of the 3 Beaune 1ers Crus produced at the domaine (the other one being Perrières) and its fleshy, almost seductive fruit quality is a delight. Cool fruit flavours, a touch of spice and chocolate and an abundance of fragrant red fruits. Drink from 2012

2008 Beaune 1er Cru Grèves

£335ib/12

This is the sterner, elder brother to the charming, prettier younger sister above, although it retains some fragrance and is not without either culture or charm. It is simply more structured and masculine and will need more time to fully bloom. A very good and serious Beaune. Drink from 2014

2008 Volnay 1er Cru Champans

£230ib/6

The first of a string of excellent Volnays. This is quite rich and full by de Montille standards, showing good flesh and plenty of fat. The aromas are pretty and very Volnay with a mix of earthy red fruits and a little black cherry. This will probably drink first but will still need a minimum of 5 years. Drink from 2015

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Mitans

£234ib/6

It's love at first sniff here, the wine pulling you in with its refined and sweet, perfumed aromas. Its fragrance continues in the mouth and there is excellent control, weight, punch and texture. Great harmony and hints of violets. Very Volnay and very lovely. Drink from 2015

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Taillepieds

£238ib/6 or £259ib/3 mags

One of the wines of the vintage in 2007 and another cracker here, although less expressive than the Mitans at this stage. It has more structure than the Mitans and less charm currently, but the length is impressive and in time it should evolve it into something beautiful. Drink from 2016

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Pézerolles

£232ib/6 or £250ib/3 mags

This is a Pommard in the style of a Volnay, certainly in terms of refinement and texture, although the flavours are clearly Pommardian. The nose is stylish, yet structured and the palate has a lovely harmony to it with a real sweetness of fruit but also a typical earthy quality. Concentrated with good power on the finish. Drink from 2015

2008 Pommard 1er Cru Les Epenots

£232ib/6

Only a couple of barrels of this were made and we almost forgot to taste it consequently, but thank goodness we did! An impressive nose gave way to a very controlled, semi-powerful palate of great balance and style. Super tannins for a Pommard. Drink from 2015

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Les Rugiens

£305ib/6

Very much in the same mould here but with even finer tannins and more length. This will be long living and a belter when mature. Drink from 2017

2008 Corton Clos du Roi Grand Cru

£312ib/6

This is very cultured on the nose, especially so for a Corton but there is also strong underlying power here and a structure and depth of fruit that will require time to re-emerge. Very good potential here. Drink from 2015

Reds – Côte de Nuits

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 'St Julien'

£250ib/12

This is quite feminine for a Nuits showing a nice mix between the minerality of the appellation and the natural fragrance of Pinot Noir. There is good purity here and nice vibrancy and transparency. Drink from 2012

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1^{er} Cru Thorey

£185ib/6

Although on the Vosne side of Nuits and therefore more feminine than the likes of Les St Georges and Pruliers to the south, this is still quite a bit punchier than the village wine and it will need more time in the cellar. The stylish fruit and the Nuits tannins mingle nicely and there is plenty of scope here. Good prospects. Drink from 2015

2008 Clos Vougeot Grand Cru

£355ib/6

Our allocation of this is tiny so it's probably a good idea if we tell you it's rubbish. We might be lying but such statements might at least ease the pain of divvying up what we do have! By the way, it's not rubbish! Drink from 2015

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Malconsorts

£480ib/6

It's a fairly similar story here! Etienne and Alix have two plots of Malconsorts which they keep separate, as one of them used to be part of La Tache to all intents and purposes. It is vinified independently and bottled under the label Cuvée Christiane, in honour of their late mother. This mere 'straightforward' Malconsorts is simply fantastic. Very limited. Drink from 2015

Domaine Lafarge, Volnay

Tasting in the dark, at times cramped, old cellars of this superb domaine is always a great experience and always a masterclass in Volnay and its differing terroirs. There are plenty of old vines in the domaine and very little new oak and the wines are encouraged to express their origins in the most natural way possible which makes for great, long-living definitive Volnays. These 2008s were tasting splendidly which is all the more encouraging when one bears in mind that they are rarely showy in youth and the malos were very late this year. Quantities are sadly limited but the wines are top notch.

2008 Côte de Beaune Villages

£150ib/12

Just what you want from such a wine. Charming earthy red fruits on the nose, some oomph in the mouth to support the fruit and excellent freshness. This should drink very nicely in a year or two and keep you going until the top wines are ready!. Drink from 2011

2008 Volnay

£240ib/12

The nose here is very stylish with a strong emphasis on cool, vibrant red fruit flavours. It's expressive and pretty with lovely flavours and plenty of charm. Very attractive and high class village wine. Drink from 2012

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Clos du Château des Ducs

£298ib/6

Lovely fragrance here on this small monopole vineyard wine. The balance is wonderful and the fragrance continues in the mouth. Great refinement and excellent subtle underlying structure. A very stylish and graceful Volnay. Drink from 2014

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Mitans

£298ib/6

Very good purity here, particularly on the mid-palate and the tannins are very fine indeed. Lots more to come. Is this a very good year for Mitans (see de Montille above)? Drink from 2014

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Clos des Chênes

£315ib/6

This is powerful and more backward with a strong spine and plenty of structure. It seems very complete despite its youth and has the potential to be very serious indeed. Drink from 2015

2008 Volnay 1^{er} Cru Caillerets

£315ib/6

As one might expect from this vineyard this is lighter in structure and altogether more feminine and more on the mineral side. There is less volume but wonderful length and the complexity and subtlety is terrific. A contrast in style but no less good. Drink from 2015

Domaine de Courcel, Pommard

Tasting young, backward, cold Pinot Noir at de Courcel at 8.45 on a cold autumn morning, after several days of intensive tasting, was never going to be easy, so it was testament to the quality of these wines that they showed so well. Yves Confuron, who quite clearly never sleeps otherwise how else could he run this estate and his family's one in Vosne (and run them so well, too,) has really galvanised this domaine over the past decade and confirmed it as one of the stars of the village. There are similarities between here and Vosne in the sense that he is blessed with a plethora of old vines and that he likes to pick quite late, ensuring natural concentration from naturally low yields. And like the Confuron-Cotetidot wines there is perhaps more fruit in their youth here than there used to be but not at the expense of longevity, although it's probably fair to say that this seems to be a trend that has spread across much of Burgundy. These 2008s will need plenty of time but appear to have all the components to enable them to evolve in to a top notch range of Pommards.

2008 Bourgogne Pinot Noir

£175ib/12

This is by far and away the most expensive Bourgogne we sell but then again it's not your average version! Its overt fragrance gives way to a wine of power and concentration underpinned by a refined structure. Pommard in style but more seductive in youth. Drink from 2012

2008 Pommard 'Vaumuriens'

£165ib/6

If you're looking for a serious village Pommard then this is it. Lying just below the mighty Les Rugiens, Vaumuriens is a great plot at this level and this example is better than so many of the 1ers Crus on the market. Lots of aroma and fragrance on the nose, rich, expressive, quite dark fruits on the palate and excellent supporting structure. Impressive. Drink from 2014

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Les Fremiers

£185ib/6

Lying adjacent to the Fremiets 1^{er} Cru of Volnay, it's perhaps unsurprising that this has quite refined fruit and more delicacy and subtlety than the rest of the range. Good flavours again and nice vibrancy and punctuation. Drink from 2014

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Grand Clos des Epenots

£225ib/6

This is the domaine's largest holding and, as always, it's one of the most expressive wines in the cellar pre-bottling. There is very good depth of flavours with plenty of earthy, dark, chewy fruit and a touch of spice. This will need some time but will be very good. Drink from 2015

2008 Pommard 1^{er} Cru Les Rugiens

£245ib/6

So often this is more backward and brooding than the Epenots but this time its bright and almost exuberant and shows a surprising level of refinement for such a young brute. The tannins kick in on the finish but one is completely won over by its perfume, the attack and the mid-palate. This could be a stunning Rugiens. Drink from 2015

Red Wines - Côte de Nuits

Domaine Henri Gouges, Nuits-St-Georges

At the first of several autumn tastings here, Gregory Gouges went into great detail about the subtle but significant effects of using gravity rather than pumps to move juice around the cuverie. We then tasted through the range and got the perfect evidence in our mouths of just what he was talking about. Building their imposing new, gravity-fed cuverie in 2007 was a very tangible demonstration of the Gouges family's desire to maintain their position as the leading domaine in Nuits-St-Georges. It was never going to improve their wines by 50%, how could it when the wines already seemed fantastic. Their 2006 Les St Georges, for example, is arguably one of the best wines the domaine has ever made. But if it could just add something extra then it would be worth the investment. And following on from a wonderful sets of wines in 2007 (the appellation of Nuits seemed to over-perform in 2007) these 2008s do indeed have something extra. And without wishing to over simplify, it seems that the improvement is in the quality of tannins. By keeping the individual grapes less crushed for longer through the gentler handling of gravity the juice stays inside the berries for longer resulting in less harsh tannins and more fragrance. Curiously, the improvement in the finesse of the tannins seems most apparent in the 'lesser' wines, which perhaps makes sense as one of the distinguishing features, generally speaking, of top wines is their finer tannins. Having said that, the top 3 wines of the range here, Les Pruliers, Les Vaucrains and Les St Georges, are simply brilliant. Time will probably show that their tannins have also been tweaked for the better once their youthful density subsides.

White

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Les Perrières

£320ib/6

This is from a mutated strain of Pinot Noir, which Coates describes as "Pinot Gouges, bearing no resemblance to Chardonnay. It is delicious". This wine traditionally ages brilliantly (20 years no problem) and this should do so, too. When young it shows elements of red fruits but as it ages it will take on Grand Cru Chablis qualities and be quite delicious. Hardly any is made so we will have to allocate! More chocolate cake, please! Drink from 2016

Reds

2008 Nuits-St-Georges

£228ib/12 or £240ib/24 halves

This must be close to the best ever village wine made at Gouges. Excellent fragrance on the nose mingles with characteristic Nuits minerality. The fruit is sweet and attractive and the flavours delightful. There is good purity here and very good length for the level. A strong success. Drink from 2013

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Chaignots

£320ib/12

We write every year that this Cru is on the up and it's probably time we stated that it has 'arrived'. The vines have now reached a good age and the extra weight and depth that this gives the wine is plain to see. Chaignots lies to the north of Nuits on the Vosne side and this certainly has an elegance and open charm more in keeping with the wines from that part of Nuits. The structure is good and the tannins nicely cultured and forgiving. This is one to drink a bit earlier than the ones below but not one to be under-estimated. Drink from 2014

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Clos des Porrets St Georges

£335ib/12

This monopole Clos that lies within Porrets St Georges, represents the largest holding in the domaine at over 3 hectares. It's from the south side of Nuits, so the flavour and aromatic profiles are slightly different to the Chaignots, but it's probably fair to say that the sweet fruit attack and fragrance of the wine bear some similarity. It tightens on the finish a little more and there is perhaps greater minerality and possibly more underlying tannin but it still seems happy to express plenty of juicy, attractive fruit flavours. Drink from 2015

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Les Pruliers

£180ib/6 or £188ib/3 mags

Over the last few vintages Les Pruliers has really bridged the quality gap between Porrets and the big two, providing an impressive stepping stone to the Vaucrains and Les St Georges. The key seems to be the coming of age of the parcel of younger vines which are now included in the blend adding an energy that seems to bring alive the innate concentration of the juice from the old vines. The nose is very refined the tannins quite superb. The acidity is just so and, this is a very serious wine. Drink from 2016

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Vaucrains

£275ib/6 or £285ib/3 mags

Yields here are always low but this year they are minuscule. The result is a wine of immense concentration that will not be ready any time soon. What is so amazing is that the wine retains such freshness (acidity is also concentrated when the wind dries out the grapes) that really lifts the deep, dark fruit flavours. Undoubtedly a classic Vaucrains. We tasted the 1993 afterwards and it was just beginning to open out beautifully, although still very youthful. This may well surpass that, which means all those lucky enough to buy some will be in for a big treat! Drink from 2016

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Les St Georges

£320ib/6 or £330ib/3 mags

Another one of the many wines on this offer that needs no introduction as it's brilliant and sells itself many times over. For the record, it's bigger, broader and more structured (which is saying something) than the Vaucrains but the tannins are gorgeous. Drink from 2016

Domaine Aurélien Verdet, Arcenant (Nuits-St-Georges)

Young Aurélien Verdet is based up in the Hautes Côtes de Nuits and has been receiving excellent press over the last couple of years. He has responded by building himself an impressive new cuverie in his home village of Arcenant and devoting even more of his time to his own wines, having previously been consulting at other wineries. His wines tend towards the fruit without him resorting to over extraction and offer lovely drinking in the short to mid-term.

2008 Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits 'Le Prieuré'

£154ib/12

This single vineyard wine is always good and again displays some delicious dark red fruit flavours that mingle with a touch of spice, earth and minerality. For a 'humble' wine this has a lot of character. Yummy. Drink from 2012

Domaine Jean Tardy, Vosne-Romanée

Guillaume Tardy, now in his early thirties, continues to upgrade the family domaine, although sadly, they have lost a couple of the 1ers Crus they had been renting out. However, there are still plenty of good wines in the cellar and Guillaume should be proud of the quality he is now producing. Not that his father was making bad wines, far from it, but today the wines have more fragrance and finesse and the tannins are perhaps a little silkier.

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 'Les Athiets'

£240ib/12

This is a classic style Chambolle; very pretty and aromatic with good fragrance in the mouth. Lightish but fleshy with plenty of sweet fruit, especially on the finish. Really attractive example. Drink from 2012

2008 Vosne Romanée 'Les Vigneux'

£250ib/12

Vigneux lies just below the great slopes of Les Suchots and Romanée Saint Vivant and is an excellent village plot. This is understandably more backward and more masculine than the Chambolle with a good structure to support its concentrated fruit flavours. There were a lot of very small grapes in this vineyard in 2008 which has perhaps heightened its intensity as well as maintaining a very refreshing and supportive bite. If this evolves as expected it could be rather special. Drink from 2013

2008 Echézeaux Grand Cru

£380ib/6

Guillaume lost his Clos Vougeot this year but as we always preferred his Echézeaux and had traditionally focussed our purchases on that we weren't too upset!. The vines here are 75 years old and the vines are well located, being up near the Clos itself. This has excellent, quite expressive aromas with lots of sweet, black fruit flavours, a hint of oak spice and probably fruit spice, too (so typical of Echézeaux) and some mocha. Good structure underneath and good persistence. Drink from 2014

Domaine Confuron-Cotetidot, Vosne-Romanée

Under Yves Confuron's control this domaine is absolutely flying at the moment. He made some of the best 2007s around (anyone who didn't buy his Suchots should get in touch – it's fabulous and we have a little left!) and he seems to have nailed it in 2008, too, although the style of the vintage makes the wines less overtly seductive. Yves always picks quite late and October was well under way by the time he finished in 2008. Thanks to a lot of old vines yields here tend to be on the low side so production levels were perhaps less dramatically reduced here than elsewhere but they were still down. On the flipside, quality is high and the concentration of fruit, tannin, acidity and matter should ensure they last a very long time.

2008 Vosne-Romanée

£259ib/12

We recently opened a bottle of the 2005 of this and promptly sold the last 10 cases we had as it was so good. If this proves to be anywhere near that level, which it may, given time, it will be well worth snaffling up. Plenty of power here but currently compact and tight knit. Very promising. Drink from 2014

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1^{er} Cru Vignerondes

£195ib/6

This used to go into a blended 1er Cru but no longer. It's always fascinating to taste a Nuits made by a Vosne producer, especially as they tend to come from vineyards on the Vosne side, like this one. It's very fragrant for a Nuits with excellent aromatics. There is lovely bite and freshness and very good balance. Lots of promise here. Drink from 2015

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Les Suchots

£215ib/6 or £224ib/3 mags

This is great. Perfumed with subtle hints of violets on the nose. It's less immediately exuberant than the 2007 but it's jam-packed with potential and the tannins are top draw. Another success. Drink from 2016

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1^{er} Cru Lavaux St Jacques

£245ib/6 or £254ib/3 mags

The vines here are about 60 years old and this is fantastic. We don't get very much sadly but boy is it good. Lovely bite, purity and freshness with an almost creamy minerality running through it. Huge promise. Drink from 2016

2008 Echézeaux Grand Cru

£360ib/6 or £369ib/3 mags

This was as tight as the proverbial backside of the famed furry creature but classic tell-tale Echezeaux spice still got through and the structure was imposing. This will need some time. Drink from 2017

2008 Clos Vougeot Grand Cru

£375ib/6

This is a classic style Clos, oozing brooding power and masculinity, yet it's not coarse or four square. Lots of scope here to become a very serious example. Drink from 2017

Domaine Hudelot-Noellat, Vosne-Romanée

NEW

If you want to appreciate the characteristic differences between villages, the terroir differences between crus from the same village and the quality differences between 1ers and Grands Crus then nowhere will you find a better place to do so than in the large cellars of this fabulous domaine. The winemaking is non-interventionist and the aim is allow the wines to express their different personalities without too much intrusion. And how well it works. All the wines have a purity of fruit and are about complexity and length rather than explosive power and extraction. Consequently, the Chambolle tastes like Chambolle and the Vosne like Vosne and the Beaumonts is entirely different to the Suchots. Being a new supplier for us we made four separate visits between September and Christmas and were blown away each time. These are gorgeous wines which will evolve with much panache and refinement. Get stuck in!

2008 Bourgogne Pinot Noir

£95ib/12

This Bourgogne comes from 15 different parcels dotted mainly around Chambolle-Musigny and it certainly has that very pure, pretty Chambolle character. Although it seems that it will drink fairly young the 2005 is only just beginning to drink so this will probably close down for a year or two before re-emerging as a delightful, great value generic. Drink from 2011

2008 Chambolle-Musigny

£240ib/12

This has a very pretty attack and sumptuous tannins. It's very charming and elegant, as a Chambolle should be, with good length and control. Drink from 2012

2008 Vosne-Romanée

£240ib/12

This is a lovely village wine with a cool, pure fruit seam running right through it. There are no hard edges but there is good acid and freshness and enough bite. Fine and elegant, this is a delight. Drink from 2012

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 'Bas de Comme'

£240ib/12

Bas de Comme is a well-sited lieu dit that lies to the north of Nuits just above the 1^{er} Cru of Les Boudots. It has an underlying Nuits minerality and earthiness but at the same time a lovely polished, slightly scented quality that is very appealing. Nuits with a hint of Vosne! Drink from 2012

2008 Vougeots 1er Cru Les Petits Vougeots

£320ib/12

This was a real revelation. The nose leaps out of the glass with great intensity and hints of fresh violets and some smokiness. The fruit is sweet and expressive yet there is deceptive weight and structure underpinning everything. Subtle and refined and simply delicious. One of the true bargains of the offer. Drink from 2013

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1er Cru Les Murgers

£180ib/6

This is very ripe and rich for a Nuits, although there is still some Nuits earthiness underneath. Plenty of fat and polish yet good bite, too and it lacks nothing in power on the finish. Drink from 2013

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru Les Charmes

£240ib/6

This is classic Chambolle and again it leaps from the glass. More violets and as well as some ink on the nose, medium weight, good freshness and quite supple tannins. The stuffing in understated but apparent and there is good length. Very pure, delicious and actually rather serious.. Drink from 2013

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Les Suchots

£210ib/6

The first of three 1ers Crus Vosnes and this is all about purity, finesse and subtlety. Lovely sweet fruit on the nose and cool, ever so slightly spicey fruit flavours in the mouth, all supported by a harmonious, delicate framework. This has very good length and will prove to be very impressive as it puts on a little weight in middle age, like the best of us! Drink from 2013

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Beaumonts

£210ib/6 or £225ib/3 mags

Oh yeah definitely! This has more overt structure and power and is a touch more backward. Despite its youth it has excellent balance, lots of flavour and personality and huge scope for improvement. A very serious wine indeed. Drink from 2014

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Malconsorts

£295ib/6 or £315ib/3 mags

There's not much of this, sadly, but it's awesome and a definite step up. The fruits on the nose are darker and more intense yet there is real transparency and purity at the same time. Good fragrance, powerful and lots of flesh on the finish. The pick of a superb trio of Vosnes. Drink from 2015

2008 Clos Vougeot Grand Cru

£375ib/6 or £395ib/3 mags or £295ib/jero

And so to the Grands Crus. The domaine used to have three parcels of Clos Vougeot but it sold the one down by the road about ten years ago, as it often flooded and also the reputation of the juice produced by vines at the bottom of the vineyard was not helpful. Ironically, the parcel has not flooded since but the family are not too distraught as the quality of this cuvée has never been better. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this isn't as hard as some Clos Vougeots and is, in fact, quite fine featured with excellent tannins and precision. There is power and structure and some earthiness but there is also a clarity of fruit which is impressive. Drink from 2015

2008 Romanée Saint-Vivant Grand Cru

£875ib/6 or £895ib/3 mags or £650ib/jero

It's so rare to taste a brilliant wine and then look up and count the barrels and find that there are actually quite a few! This has gorgeous fragrance and lovely sweet fruit. There is terrific power but it's controlled and very refined. It really fills the mouth with sumptuous, precious, complex fruit flavours and there is so much more to come. Superb. Drink from 2016

2008 Richebourg Grand Cru

£895ib/6 or £915ib/3 mags or £650ib/jero

There are worse ways of earning a living then debating which of these two Grands Crus you prefer. Both are mega. This is super serious and the nose wows you instantly. Again the length is terrific and the complexity obvious. You could always just buy both! Drink from 2016

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard & Fils, Vosne-Romanée

Sylvain has finished his lovely new cellar in which it is a joy to taste. The craftwork is very impressive. The new cuverie is also well under way and the ambitious next phase in this family domaine's dramatic and exciting evolution is almost complete. His wines sell out instantly and it always amazes us to think that a mere 20 years ago his wines weren't even imported into the UK. As Coates enthuses "Cathiard is one of my favorite growers in the whole of Burgundy. There is a touch of genius here in the winemaking, resulting in bottles of exceptional purity and fragrance: Pinot Noir at its most elegant". These 2008s appear to be another fine set of wines and will not disappoint his loyal legion of fans.

2008 Vosne-Romanée

£175ib/6

Quite expressive already with a touch of oak spice and some rich fruit flavours. Good freshness and nicely stylish. Drink from 2012

2008 Chambolle-Musigny Clos de l'Orme

£192ib/6

Terrific Chambolle. Lovely fragrance and elegance with good bite and punctuation. Some spice and very good concentration. A delight. Drink from 2012

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1^{er} Cru Thorey

£295ib/6

Good intensity of fruit here with hints of black cherry and earth. The tannins are wonderfully silky, especially for a Nuits, and there is a lovely harmony about this wine. Drink from 2013

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1^{er} Cru Murgers

£310ib/6

The vines here are a bit older (65 years) and produced lots of small berries which has resulted in a wine of impressive intensity. There is 100% new oak here but such is the concentration it is very well integrated. Expressive and quite exuberant. A very sexy Nuits. Drink from 2014

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru En Orveaux

£345ib/6

This is very expressive with aromas of strawberry creams. Delicious fruit flavours, very good acid and a real airy quality about it. Very long and downright impressive. Drink from 2014

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Reignots

£345ib/6

The vines here are younger and curiously the wine is much more closed and backward at this stage. It has good consistency in the mouth and enough structure to help it age very well, as its length suggests it will. Drink 2014

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Suchots

£395ib/6

This is the most fragrant of the 1ers Crus and it's really on form today (of course, it's the one we get least of!) The tannins are top class and it has excellent perfume and finesse with strong, clean acid and very good length. Drink from 2014

2008 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Malconsorts

£480ib/6

This has perhaps less fragrance but more bite. Its's broader and the flavours a touch darker. The structure is more overt and the wine is generally more backwards and brooding. Needs time. Drink from 2015

Domaine Grivot, Vosne-Romanée

Etienne Grivot's climb to the top of the quality tree in Vosne continues with another very fine selection of wines. During the noughties he eased off the extraction and began producing wines of greater finesse and purity that had finer tannins and more complexity, as well as greater consistency. His last few vintages have been sensational and his 2008s are amongst the finest wines of the vintage.

White

2008 Bourgogne Blanc

£156ib/12

We had a couple of cases of the 2005 of this floating around in our bond which we'd forgotten about so we pulled the cork on a bottle and were mightily impressed. Etienne doesn't always remember to show us this so we insisted on tasting it this time and it was again delightful. It's not cheap for a Bourgogne Blanc but it is bloody good! From a small plot in the heart of Vosne, it has very good freshness and some punch to it, with sweet, cultured, rounded fruit flavours. Impossible to dislike. Drink from 2011.

Reds

2008 Chambolle-Musigny Combe d'Orveaux

£295ib/6

Writing these notes I get a sense of what the appellation of Chambolle has really achieved in 2008. It didn't seem to register tasting from one cellar to the next but here at the computer every Chambolle we have bought seems to be getting a rave review (see Arlaud's village and Lignier's 1er Cru later!). This is no exception. It's stunning. Great fragrance on both the nose and in the mouth and seamless cool, pure fruit flavours punctuated by a lovely vibrancy. Drink from 2012

2008 Vosne-Romanée

£255ib/12

The nose sucks you in and then the palate does not disappoint. Structured and quite powerful, this will need a little more time than the Chambolle but it will be worth the wait. Drink from 2013

2008 Nuits-St-Georges 1^{er} Cru Boudots

£295ib/6

This is another very sexy Nuits and not totally dissimilar to Cathiard's Murgers (the two vineyards are close neighbours). This is perhaps slightly fatter with hints of coffee and stacks of fruit. It may well close down post bottling but for now is very appealing! Drink from 2014

2007 Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Beaux Monts**£295ib/6**

The Brulées was good and the Reignots was fleshier but this was stand out so we have concentrated our purchases on this. Intense, beautifully textured, complex with lovely finesse and real length. A top notch 1er Cru. Drink from 2015

2007 Clos Vougeot Grand Cru**£345ib/6 or £355ib/3 mags**

Further proof that you can make Clos Vougeot that is about finesse as well as power (also see Hudelot). The attack is all fresh, almost silky fruit and then the power arrives on the finish. Lots to come but already easy to see the quality. Drink from 2015

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod, Chambolle-Musigny

One of the big three of Chambolle along with Mugnier and de Vogue, Ghislaine Barthod continues to produce enviable Pinot Noir. They lack nothing in concentration yet they are more about finesse, understated power and length than bravado and instant pleasure. Sadly our allocation is tiny but we promise to do our best to increase it as soon as we can!

2008 Chambolle-Musigny**£149ib/6**

Lovely, classic Chambolle with a real richesse of fruit. There is power but it's controlled and balanced and there is length and freshness in abundance. A seriously good village wine. Drink from 2013

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 1^{er} Cru Les Cras**£259ib/6**

This is the only 1er Cru we get but it is rather a good one! Finesse, style and great concentration and purity. Yes please! Drink from 2015

Domaine Louis Boillot, Chambolle-Musigny

Louis Boillot, husband of Ghislaine Barthod, shares a cellar with his wife. Since he split from his brothers a few years ago, he has gradually established himself as an address of great repute and tasting through his wide range of 2008s was indeed a treat. Louis has lots of small parcels of different wines, all of which have merit which makes it particularly tricky deciding which ones to buy! We picked these three, firstly because they were lovely, secondly because we felt they offered very good value and thirdly because they dovetailed nicely with the rest of the list. If you haven't tried his wines before we urge you to do so, you will be impressed. They are very pure and beautifully representative of their appellations. Most of the vines are old and the elegance of the wines contrasts nicely with their natural old vine concentration. Top wines.

2008 Volnay 'Grands Poisots'**£180ib/12**

This is a seriously good village Volnay at a great price. Fine-grained, elegant, stylish, pure and well balanced. The vines are 55 years old and certainly provide plenty of depth and character to set this apart from so many of its contemporaries. Drink from 2012

2008 Volnay 1er Cru Les Brouillards**£320ib/12**

The vines are 10 years older here and this is a fantastic 1er Cru, which competes well with the de Montille and Lafarge offerings earlier in this offer. Great concentration on the nose and a real sense of completeness and harmony in the mouth. Very Volnay, wonderfully pure and very good. Drink from 2014

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Cherbaudes**£245ib/6**

The last wine of a hard day's tasting and it still got through and hit the spot. Cherbaudes is a small, lesser-known but well-placed vineyard in the heart of Gevrey and the vines here are 90 years old. It's still quite reserved initially but it gradually wins you over with its power and concentration. Stacks of fruit here, real intensity and amazing length. Quite simply a little stunner, though not so little despite its obvious finesse and poise. Drink from 2015

Domaine des Lambrays, Morey-St-Denis

Thierry has certainly nailed it in 2008. In contrast with his 2007s, which will provide relatively early drinking, these 2008s should age very well; they are really terrific. While neighbouring Clos de Tart has been busy 're-positioning' itself (a wonderful euphemism for putting its prices up by 50%!), Thierry has been quietly going about his business producing some seriously nice wines for a fraction of the price. 3 cases of Clos des Lambrays or 1 case of Clos de Tart? It's a no brainer!

The Clos itself is, to all intents and purposes, a huge monopole. Domaine Taupenet-Merme own a small postage stamp in the corner but Lambrays own 8.66 hectares of the 8.84 hectare plot. Varied in its exposition, soil and age of vine, Thierry generally declassifies a certain amount of the juice from the Clos into the Morey 1er Cru (a blend of two 1ers Crus), ensuring that only the very best barrels end up in the Grand Cru. For us, we find the 1er Cru falls between two stools. It lacks the power and longevity of the Grand Cru but at the same time lacks the more immediate charm and appeal of the village wine. Having said that, we have drunk many fine bottles of the 1er Cru over the years but for the purposes of this offer we are proposing just the delicious Morey village and the main man, the Clos.

White

2008 Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Clos du Cailleret

£325ib/6

Acquired from the Chartron family back in the 1990s, this is one of the best vineyards in Puligny, lying just along from Montrachet itself on the same slope. This has sumptuous flesh all mixed up with some mouthwatering minerality. Very intense, pure flavours and a lovely stony finish. Drink from 2011

Reds

2008 Morey-St-Denis

£295ib/12

This is really good. Exuberant on the nose with lots of cool, ripe, fresh fruit aromas. In the mouth it is fleshy and juicy yet the freshness and bite come through beautifully. Lots of spice and dark fruits. Quite lovely. Drink from 2012

2008 Clos des Lambrays

£375ib/6 or £380ib/3 mags

Big, immediate impact on the nose with a compact richness and real fruit intensity. Again very good punctuation and bite which really lift the rich, black fruit flavours. Quite linear for such a powerful wine and very good length and fruit quality. A top class Clos. Drink from 2014

Domaine Lucie & Auguste Lignier, Morey-St-Denis

We thought Kellen Lignier had done a great job with her 2007s but we were blown away by her 2008s. Not one to shirk a challenge, in the last 3 years she has really taken things by the scruff of the neck and must be applauded for producing just a top class range of wines so quickly.. In setting up a new domaine, named after her children, she made a very positive statement that she was here for the long haul and that she would do all she could to make her late husband, Roman, proud. And as we enter a new decade, he certainly would be.

She now has an eminently sensible new cellar master working under her, Baptiste, who will provide her with good support and she already seems to have a very natural feel for her vineyards. She is blessed with many old vines and some terrific plots which will provide her with some fantastic raw materials. Let's hope she can continue in such good form for many years to come. Whether you are looking for village wines, 1ers Crus or are splashing out on some bigger boys there is plenty for you here. Historically (under the old Hubert Lignier label) the wines at this domaine always aged well, indeed needed time to show their true colours and these will, too, but is there already more charm about the wines? Maybe, and her use of whole clusters (to varying degrees depending on the cru) can only have helped. Hurrah!

2008 Morey-St-Denis Clos de la Sionnière

£250ib/12

The domaine is situated next to the renowned restaurant and hotel, the Castel Très Girard, in the heart of Morey St Denis and this vineyard lies just in front of the Castel. Although, the other cuvée of Morey St Denis (see below) is titled 'Vieilles Vignes', the vines here are almost as old. However, Kellen feels they produce a wine of unique personality so she prefers to bottle their juice separately and she is right to do so. This has that lovely savoury quality, typical of Morey with red and black brambly fruits and a touch of spice. There is some old vine gaminess but also some excellent freshness that really lifts the wine. Balanced, quite weighty, with good length and acid, this should evolve into a very lovely village wine. Drink from 2014

2008 Morey-St-Denis Vieilles Vignes

£250ib/12

At this stage the differences between the two wines is less marked than it will be in five years time but even now some of the aromas and flavours are different. Some of the vines here are 100 years old, with most around 80. There are aromas of strawberry creams and dark chocolate yet also a hint of game. The texture is terrific and very cultured and the tannins are wonderful. Is it better? Hard to say, it's just different. Both are awesome village wines. Drink from 2014

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 'Bussières'

£250ib/12

Bussières is another well-sited vineyard that sits just below the 1er Cru Les Sentiers. Yields were well down in 2008 with only 4 barrels being made (100 cases) and the wine is more backward than the two Moreys but clearly very concentrated. There is quite a bit of power for a Chambolle with charming underlying fragrance. Needs time but should be a cracker. Drink from 2015

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 'Les Seuvrées'

£240ib/12

Perhaps more than any other wine this Gevrey has really benefitted from having 50% whole clusters. It has more fragrance and flesh than previously and the tannins are well integrated and possibly a touch softer. It retains the Gevrey minerality and earthy fruit flavours but has much more charm. A really lovely Gevrey. Drink from 2013

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru Les Baudes

£298ib/6 or £316ib/3 mags

Simply brilliant wine and further proof of the success of the appellation in 2008. The nose is gorgeous and so Chambolle with great fragrance and a wealth of fruit. The texture is great and the sheer intensity of fruit, underpinned by a controlled and sophisticated structure, is bewitching. For us, one of the wines of the list. Drink from 2015

2008 Morey-St-Denis 1er Cru Cuvée Romain Lignier

£298ib/6 or £316ib/3 mags

This is now a blend of three 1ers crus, with Riotte making its debut alongside the old-timers of Faconnières and Chenevery. The vines are aged between 50 and 100 years old and one can sense a real old vine intensity both on the nose and in the mouth. Lots of glycerollic flesh here and heaps of dense, black yet fresh, fruit aromas. Lots of power and structure and real complexity and length. This could be exceptional, given time. Drink from 2016

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Aux Combottes

£350ib/3 mags

There is only one large barrel of this and all of it will be bottled in magnums. Bearing in mind that usually it's a wine that needs a lot of cellaring, you won't be in a hurry to drink the magnums! The wine itself is very dense and shows a lot of power and tannin. The oak is quite prominent at the moment but that should resolve itself and the wine has a strong supportive structure. For the patient and youthful amongst you! Drink from 2020

2008 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru**£450ib/6**

There's not much of this either but my word it's good. It's much more fragrant and charming than the Combottes (well, it is Charmes, after all) with excellent finesse and real depth. There is latent power on the finish and lots of persistence. This might require more chocolate cake, if you want some! Drink from 2017

2008 Clos de la Roche Grand Cru**£450ib/6 or £480ib/3mags or £350/jero**

What a phenomenal way to end a great tasting. This is more masculine than the Charmes (naturally) but still retains some elegance and has exceptionally refined tannins. Hugely long, layered, dense and simply mind blowing. Drink from 2018

Dujac Fils & Père, Morey-St-Denis

2008 is shaping up to be a vintage year for Dujac. Across the range the wines are stunning and could be a match for their magnificent 2006s. Time will tell. We will be offering the Domaine wines later in the year but for now we have their delightful Fils & Père bottlings to propose. The Seysses family work very closely with the growers they have contracts with and ensure they get just the right quality of juice they are looking for. In style they tend to a touch more forward than the domaine wines and provide an opportunity to drink some Dujac while the other wines are maturing in the cellar.

White**2008 Morey-St-Denis Blanc****£245ib/12**

Without doubt this is the best white Morey made at Dujac. It has a lovely, tangible richness but is beautifully lively and fresh. Really well balanced and very pure and mouthwatering. Good extract and a strong finish. Drink from 2011

Reds**2008 Morey-St-Denis****£236ib/12**

Terrific wine full of panache and style. Aromatic, nicely textured with very good tannins and impressive length for a village wine. Quite dense flavours but once again, good freshness. A big success. Drink from 2012

2008 Chambolle-Musigny**£236ib/12**

Slightly more aromatic perhaps and certainly good transparency but there is also good flesh and weight. Poised, balanced with good quality tannins and grip. Again, freshness throughout. Very easy to love. Drink from 2012

Domaine Arlaud, Morey-St-Denis

This is a real family affair producing top class wines of great purity and finesse. Cyprien and his brother Roman, run the domaine but their father, Hervé, is still very much on the payroll and their sister, Bertille, looks after the horses that she uses to work the vineyards. Inside their huge cuverie, built from scratch in 2004, there is a wonderful photograph of the diminutive Bertille strapped up to Nougat, her massive shire horse, as she guides him between the rows of vines.

Since the completion of the aforementioned cuverie the domaine has reached a new level of quality and now produces, consistently, some of the finest wines in what is a very progressive village. The domaine is now fully biodynamic. During one of our visits in the autumn, when discussing the evolution of the style of the domaine's wines, Cyprien was candid enough to admit that as his own style preferences have changed as he's got older so he has adapted his winemaking techniques to produce the kind of wines he likes to drink. Today he is looking for subtlety, length, purity, finesse, terroir and complexity so you won't find any fruit bombs here, which suits us just fine!

The 2008s here are very much in that mould, although some wines are more powerful than others. It was generally quite a small crop at Arlaud and some wines were down as much as 45%. Great for quality not so great for the accounts and not so easy when having to do your allocations!

2008 Bourgogne Roncevie**£108ib/12**

This vineyard used to be classified as Gevrey-Chambertin, until it got bought by someone from outside of the village, whereupon it was promptly downgraded to a generic level. However, their misfortune is good news for us consumers as it means we get our hands on a wine battling much further up the order than its price suggests it should. Roncevie lies across the road from the Grand Cru Charmes-Chambertin which is not a bad place for a Bourgogne to be! The 2008 is its usual high quality, perhaps a touch prettier than usual with good fragrance and quite open fruit flavours. This should drink very well over the next five years or so. Drink from 2011

2008 Morey-St-Denis**£225ib/12**

This has good weight and structure and a nice balance between ripe fruit and acidity. Lots of flesh and plenty of persistence. A first rate Morey. Drink from 2013

2008 Chambolle-Musigny**£235ib/12**

This is much gentler than the Morey at the moment, perhaps merely because it's behind it in terms of its evolution. It shows good Chambolle fragrance and nice focus and once it puts on weight it should be very good. Drink from 2013

2008 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru Les Sentiers**£168ib/6**

This has much the same aromatic profile as the village Chambolle, although it's more complete at this stage (it was the first wine in the cellar to finish its malo). More red fruits than black and really attractive fragrance in the mouth. Drink from 2013

2008 Morey-St-Denis 1er Cru Les Ruchots**£175ib/6**

As always this is one of the stars of the range. The nose is serious; intense and pure. There is real depth of flavour and the tannins are spot on. Great length and real punch. Very harmonious. Super wine. Drink from 2013

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Aux Combottes**£180ib/6**

One of the other stars of the range but sadly this was one of the real sufferers quantity-wise., down almost 50%. For a Gevrey this is wonderfully refined and elegant and one can really sense the concentration of this wine (not surprising considering the yields). Excellent tannins and control. First class. Drink from 2014.

2008 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru**£238ib/6 or £245ib/3 mags**

This is the domaine's largest holding of Grand Cru by some way and is a blend of two well-located parcels. It's a classical Charmes; in style aromatic, fragrant, elegant, a touch feminine. Not super powerful but very well balanced with real persistence. Drink from 2014

2008 Clos de la Roche Grand Cru**£255ib/6 or £265ib/3 mags**

This is fatter and weightier, with possibly darker fruits and more overt structure. It's not necessarily better than the Charmes just stylistically quite different. The mid palate is strong with good layers and there's plenty of flesh on the finish. Drink from 2015

2008 Clos St Denis Grand Cru**£335ib/6 or £345ib/3 mags**

As much as it pains me say, as there is so little of this, it's quite superb. Lovely precision on both the nose and the palate which really accentuates the intensity. Fine-featured, excellent tannins and real depth on the finish.

2008 Bonnes Mares Grand Cru**£395ib/6 or £405ib/3 mags**

This is still very much a baby and seems very backward compared to the previous wine. It's bigger and more structured and will need more time to reach its apogée. Lots of potential. Drink from 2016

Domaine Gilles Duroché, Gevrey-Chambertin**NEW**

This was a very exciting find for us back in October. The small domaine is run by the young and intelligent Pierre Duroché, who took over from his jovial father, Gilles, in 2005, not a bad year in which to start! Since then he has implemented various changes in both the vineyards and the cellar which have had a quick and dramatic effect on the finished wines. We liked what he was saying, his approach to winemaking, his techniques and, perhaps most importantly, his quiet but steadfast ambitions.

One of the first things Pierre did was to split up the village Gevrey into three different parcels, as he felt each had a unique and significant enough character to warrant it. He has cut yields, he has tried to avoid pumping the juice around, he is keeping extraction to a minimum and he is using new oak very sensibly. He wants to make wines that speak of where they come from and show their terroir and to achieve this he feels that purity of fruit and finesse of tannins will help him most. We wholeheartedly agree.

We are delighted to be offering his wines in the UK for the first time and we suggest you board the train whilst there are still plenty of spare seats because this guy is going places. It's worth also highlighting that these wines are currently great value whilst he establishes himself.

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 'Les Jeunes Rois'**£189ib/12**

This vineyard lies to the north of Gevrey and the vines are 60 years old. It has a really nice mix of Pinot fragrance and Gevrey earthiness, excellent freshness and acidity, positive, ripe tannins and very good balance. Very stylish. Drink from 2012

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Champeaux**£250ib/12**

This is incredibly aromatic and very pretty for a Gevrey. It's quite linear and tightens a touch on the finish and is more about length than mid-palate fat, though it doesn't lack sweet fruit or concentration. Drink from 2013

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Lavaux St Jacques**£250ib/12**

There are 5 different parcels within this one vineyard (a classic example of how morcelated Burgundy is) totalling one hectare. The nose is fantastic, seriously good. It's quite different in style to the Champeaux, more masculine and more overtly structured. It's still fragrant, though less so, yet with good Gevrey earthiness and real, understated power. There's 50% new oak here but it's not noticeable such is the natural concentration. Terrific length, too. A steal. Drink from 2013

2008 Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru**£180ib/6**

Another 5 separate parcels here, too. The nose is very distinctive and the wine oozes charm and finesse. It's really graceful and the tannins and balance are ideal. Impossible to not like this. Drink from 2013

2008 Latricières-Chambertin Grand Cru**£218/6**

Tiny quantities here, just 2 barrels (50 cases), one of which is new. The vines are 50 years old and the wine is great. Beautiful precision on the nose and very fine featured, as good Latricières should be. Gorgeous aromas and flavours with, once again, an understated power running through the wine. Magic. Drink from 2014

2008 Chambertin Clos de Bèze Grand Cru**£295ib/6**

Much more here, 2.5 barrels! This is more backward and less evolved. More brooding and grumpy, although it's not a massive wine. It is very concentrate; the vines are 90 years old. The purity evident in all the other wine is still here and there is good bite and clearly bags of potential. Drink from 2015

Domaine Pierre Damoy, Gevrey-Chambertin

It's not impossible that these 2008s are the best wines Pierre Damoy has ever made. He has long been someone who likes to pick late but clearly this year, with the effects of the north wind, the traditionally intense concentration of his wines has been buoyed up by wonderful freshness (from the concentrated acidity) which has really lifted the wines and highlighted some lovely Pinot flavours. The wines are still dense and powerful but they seem more measured. And I am convinced that his Chappelle has reached new heights this year. If you haven't bought these wines before now may just be the time dip your toes and if you have then you're in for a treat!

2008 Gevrey-Chambertin 'Clos Tamisot'

£175ib/6

This is a small monopole vineyard that lies close to the domaine and house and produces very superior Gevrey-Chambertin. It's not officially a 1er Cru but it could be. The fruits are dark and firm and there is plenty of punch and structure to support these intense fruit flavours. Drink from 2013

2007 Chapelle Chambertin Grand Cru

£360ib/6

Yields were better here (they have been too low in the past) and the wine was really singing. The 2007 was a good step forward but this is a giant leap. Real control to this wine and excellent consistency in the mouth. There is fresh, dense, refined fruit and real length of flavour. Impressive. Drink from 2015

2008 Chambertin Clos de Bèze Grand Cru

£435ib/6

Pierre owns virtually half of Clos de Bèze so were he to declassify some juice or sell some off to negotiants should he be unhappy with any of it. And even if he does, with over 5 hectares of vines he'll still be left with plenty of top quality juice. This has plenty of fragrance on the nose and a good fruit attack but then it shuts down on the palate and tightens up. It all seems to be in there but it will take some time to come back out. Drink from 2017

2008 Chambertin Grand Cru

£450ib/6

This is potentially outstanding. Real power and intensity and again good vibrancy and grip. It appears dense and masculine with a strong but balanced structure. Could be very serious. Drink from 2018

Domaine Jean Fournier, Marsannay

Exciting things are happening in Marsannay, where there appear to be lots of ambitious growers with bags of energy making some great wines. Laurent Fournier is very much at the forefront of the developments, crafting some sensational wines from this re-emerging appellation. Marsannay lies just a few miles to the north of Gevrey-Chambertin, with Fixin between the two. As a rule Marsannay tends to produce more generous wines than its neighbour, certainly with its red wines, which can border on the rustic in Fixin. Laurent, intelligent and articulate, makes a wide range of wines from which we have chosen our 4 favourites. Nothing like a spot of cherry picking! Remarkably, quantities are quite limited thanks to the enormous demand for his wines, though it's easy to see why when tasting them. The key to the quality of the reds is perhaps their fine tannins, perhaps more often associated with the wines of grander villages. We highly recommend these wines to those of you who don't want to break the bank but who want something quite classical with a touch of class. In 2008 quantities were well down but happily quality is very high.

White

2008 Marsannay Clos du Roy Blanc

£159ib/12

Tiny yields this year. Super nose, very concentrated with strong underlying minerality. Very rich but not heavy, with good energy and vitality. The oak is in check and there is excellent structure. Seriously high quality and will improve. Drink from 2011

Reds

2008 Marsannay Echézots

£148ib/12

Sweet, fleshy fruit aromas abound here and the palate is much the same. Quite dark fruits and good mid-palate weight. Will be delicious. Drink from 2011

2008 Marsannay Clos du Roy Rouge

£148ib/12

This is much tighter and linear than the Echézots with a touch more structure and a bit more tannin. Very stylish and well crafted. Will age well. Drink from 2012

2008 Marsannay Trois Terres

£104ib/6

As always this is immensely powerful and backward with lots of structure to support the dense fruit. Very low yields. Very fine tannins and very, very long. Might impressive for a Marsannay. Drink from 2014

Domaine Bernard Coillot, Marsannay

Co-incidentally, Cristophe Coillot lives next door to Laurent Fournier which makes tastings nice and easy and, like Laurent, Christophe has really made a name for himself in recent years and has a huge following for his wines, which run out quickly. He is almost a permanent fixture in the reviews of the top wines in the Burgundy bible *Bourgogne Aujourd'hui*.

2008 Côte de Nuits Villages

£128ib/12

This wine has been a great success since we first bought the 2005. Quite sophisticated for a wine at this level, very much in the style of a Gevrey, with good earthy character and a mix of red and dark fruit. Well balanced and very good value. Drink from 2011.

The minimum order is 1 case of 6 bottles. Delivery charges will apply on all orders under £500. We offer storage (at Vinoteque) at £7.50 ex vat per 12 bottle case per year. Delivery to Vinoteque is free but delivery charges will apply when the wines are eventually delivered to your home. Payment is due on receipt of invoice.

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Kennington, London SE17 3UR
Tel: 0207 582 2500 Fax: 0207 582 2210**