

FLINT WINES

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Burgundy Dinner Morey-St-Denis v Vosne-Romanée 31st March 2009

All of the wines were decanted between two and three hours before they were poured. They were served in 3 flights of 4 wines. We tried to match quality levels and age within each flight as much as possible.

Flight 1

2002 Morey-St-Denis 1er Cru Faconnières, Domaine Lignier-Michelot

From a vineyard that sits just below the Grand Cru, Clos de la Roche, this opened out beautifully in the glass. It had good fragrance mixed with plenty of spice and brambly earth. The tannins were cultured and there was good balance and consistency in the mouth. The overall feel was one of understated (yet concentrated) refinement.

2001 Morey-St-Denis 1er Cru Chaffots, Domaine Hubert Lignier

Les Chaffots lies above the Clos St Denis but in fact this was a slightly chunkier effort. It was a touch more masculine and still showed some oak, although there was good underlying structure and weight. Less charming but with perhaps more still to come.

2002 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Les Brulées, Domaine Jean Grivot

This was perhaps the most backward wine of the flight, still showing plenty of tannin and very little evolution. There was plenty of power and more of a sense of extraction. Structured and well built, this gave the impression of needing at least another 3 or 4 years.

2001 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Les Suchots, Domaine Robert Arnoux

This wine arrived with a lofty reputation (Burghound claims that Pascal Lachaux (winemaker at Arnoux) is the best exponent of Suchots) and it did not disappoint. The nose was gorgeously aromatic with a lot of spice, reminiscent of an Echézeaux (Jeremy confirmed that the vines were on the edge of Suchots, bordering Echézeaux, which made sense). The palate was open and hedonistic yet cool and refined at the same time. The tannins were supple and there was real fragrance in the mouth. Very Pinot and very lovely. The Faconnières won the flight for value, being less than half the price of this, but strictly on quality this romped home.

Flight 2

1999 Clos des Lambrays Grand Cru, Domaine des Lambrays

This was the only non 2001 in the flight and, to a certain degree it struggled in this company, although that was more of a reflection of the quality of the other 3 wines than anything else, as this would have given much pleasure drunk alone. It also confirms just how good the top 2001 Côte de Nuits really are. Generally the '99s are just beginning to open up and this gave the impression of being about to blossom and we may have just hit it a year or two too soon. It showed plenty of flesh and deep, rich, mouth-filling fruit flavours with a hint of spice.

2001 Clos St Denis Grand Cru, Domaine Dujac

We asked everyone to pick both their wine of each flight and the wine of the evening and this superstar cleaned up in both, although Lignier's Clos de la Roche gave it a run for its money in the evening vote. Hugely expressive on the nose with lots of spice, lush ripe fruits and a touch of sweet oak. In the mouth it has control, depth, length and real complexity and bags of charm. No hard edges whatsoever yet the flavours were still fairly youthful and there could be plenty still to come. Impossible not to love this wine.

2001 Vosne-Romanée 1^{er} Cru Les Malconsorts, Domaine Sylvain Cathiard

If the Suchots is the Arnoux signature wine then this is Sylvain's. Still very much a baby but what wonderful juice.. Powerful and punchy yet very refined tannins and terrific balance. Fairly unevolved but excellent harmony and lots of length. Terrific wine for the future. A Grand Cru in all but name.

2001 Echézeaux Grand Cru, Domaine Dujac

Jeremy felt that the Echézeaux has been the recent big improver in their line up and this certainly backed up that theory. It was seriously good. Similar aromas to the Suchots tasted in Flight 1 and wonderfully sumptuous tannins and deliciously fleshy flavours. Hints of coffee, too and lots of fruit and, as with the Clos St Denis, there is a wonderful freshness and poise.

Flight 3

2001 Clos de la Roche Grand Cru, Domaine Hubert Lignier

After the second flight this final flight had a tough act to follow but it did not disappoint. Lignier's Clos de la Roche is a benchmark wine, made from old vines and built to last and this was top draw. It had impressed us during a 10 year vertical of the Cru 18 months ago and again showed bags of potential. Masculine, well-structured with good bite and tannin, the fruit was just beginning to show itself but there appears so much more to come. Like all the 2001s we tasted there was good definition and purity. This proved to be the second favourite wine of the evening behind the Clos St Denis.

2001 Clos de Tart Grand Cru, Domaine Clos de Tart

Clos de Tart, which is sadly in the process of re-positioning itself financially (jumping up its prices, in other words) through its new UK agent Corney and Barrow, is traditionally a late picker, preferring to produce bigger wines than some of its neighbours. Curiously, having tasted this wine earlier in the week and on previous occasions when its precision and bite were very impressive, it seemed in this instance a little more foursquare than previously. Whether that was the company it was keeping or merely that it wasn't singing on the night, is open to question. That is not to say that it wasn't impressive and it lacked nothing in concentration and weight, just perhaps a little finesse compared to the following two wines.

2000 Romanée-Saint-Vivant Grand Cru, Domaine Robert Arnoux

2000 was dismissed in some quarters as a 'restaurant vintage', not a wine for private collectors. Well this RSV blew that theory out of the water. It was fantastic. It had reached that seductively mature stage where a degree of evolution mingles with an energetic freshness. It was controlled, long, refined and beautifully poised and pure. If there are many better 2000s that we look forward to drinking them!

2002 Richebourg Grand Cru, Domaine Hudelot-Noellat

For Sam this was the wine of the night; winning on power, density and concentration. Its character was a mix of dark fruit, spice and delicate wood flavours backed up by incredible richness and balance. It is only just beginning to show its class, too, as it opened up during the forty minutes that I (Sam) managed to keep it in my glass (great restraint), having already had 3 hours in the decanter. A wine with a great future ahead of it; Burghound suggests a twenty plus year drinking window and it is hard to disagree with him. Burgundy at its very finest because despite such depth and concentration this Richebourg retained the elegance that only Burgundy is capable of. A great treat