

Bourgogne Report 2021

The charming true classic vintage What was once normal is now the exception

I went to Burgundy with a similar frame of mind as I had during the Bordeaux Primeur 2021 campaign. It was surprisingly quiet in the run-up to this vintage. If you think about the weather conditions here in 2021, you can imagine that nearby Burgundy was certainly not a perfect starting point for sun-kissed and opulent grape juices. So I also expected that in general we would find many wines here with a diluted character, unripe tannins and hard acidity. But as Natalie Tollot said so well, "This is a year of the winegrowers!" And again, that's what you start to realise in a year like this. You also realise what a prestigious Burgundy portfolio we have in the end.

In terms of yields, 2021 was the lowest in decades. Which means we have to prepare ourselves for a reduced allocation again. The decisive factor for the small harvest (on average 50% less, but in some cases up to 75% less than a normal harvest) was not only downy or powdery mildew, as in Switzerland, but above all the frost at the beginning of April. While there was only one frost period in the Côte de Nuits, there were three in the southern Côte de Beaune from early to mid-April. The white wines were therefore more severely affected.

The rather cool and often rainy weather meant that the harvest took place in the last third of September - what 20 years ago was still the norm, but today is the exception. In comparison, the 2019 and 2020 grapes were harvested almost a month earlier. The effects can be felt to a large extent in the style of the wines. This is a true classic vintage. The majority of the vintners we visited also love it because this vintage separates the wheat from the chaff and they can really prove themselves.

The red wines are characterised by a wonderful freshness, energy and elegance. They also have sweet red fruits throughout with lots of charm, medium body and soft, restrained tannins. Delicate and subtle rather than massive and opulent. Alcohol levels are modest and digestible compared to 2019 and 2020 (14-15% by volume) at 12.5 to a maximum of 13.5% by volume. A slight chaptalisation to prolong fermentation was quite common. The wines are very charming and seem almost ready to drink already. This vintage will certainly come into beautiful drinking maturity quickly after bottling and may never close. Nevertheless, I believe that with their energy and balance, they also have very good ageing potential.

It was very exciting to hear that most winemakers have significantly adapted the vinification to suit this vintage (e.g. less use of new wood, shorter ageing, stronger extraction, etc.), while some have followed their tried-and-tested methods, arguing that this would better reflect the differences between the vintages.

After the third consecutive vintage with large yield losses, the market has dried up completely. Most trading houses are aggressively trying to cover their demand for grapes, musts or young wines and sometimes pay astronomical prices. Thus, the price spiral continues to turn and we will probably have to contend with very high prices at times.

In 2022, the winegrowers were able to harvest a normal yield for the first time in many years, so we are hoping for some improvement.

Santé!

Mario Aschwanden

Domaine Marcel Couturier

(not in the portfolio)

This is a terrific domaine that I discovered by chance on my Loire trip when I bought a great 2018 Pouilly-Fuissé from this winery from a shop in the middle of nowhere. Founded in 2005 by Marcel Couturier, the winery is now run by him and his son Auxence, who is only 23 years old. The vineyard covers 12.5 ha and produces around 100,000 bottles in a normal year. Auxence made his first wine aged 15 and likes to experiment. He has gained a lot experience in France, including in the Jura region with the renowned biodynamic winemaker J.M. Ganevat.

The wines are already cultivated organically and will be adapted to biodynamic in the coming years.

Mâcon Aux Scellés	88
Mâcon-Vinzelles Au Corlier	90
Mâcon-Fuissé	89
Pouilly-Loché Vieilles Vignes	90/91
Pouilly-Loché Le Bourg	92
Saint-Véran	90
Pouilly-Fuissé Clos Scellés	91/92

Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

In the half-empty cellar of Charles van Cayet we tasted fresh and crisp Pinots. There were only 90 Burgundy barrels from the 2021 production, while in a more abundant year, such as 2018, there can be as many as 230.

Chambolle-Musigny	88-89
Vosne-Romanée	89-91
Vougeot 1 ^{er} Cru Les Petits Vougeot	90-91
Nuits-Saint-Georges 1 ^{er} Cru les Murger	90-92
Vosne-Romanée 1 ^{er} Cru Suchots	91-93
Richebourg Grand Cru	94-96

Domaine Bruno Colin

This vineyard was particularly hard hit by frost in early to mid-April. Only 30% of a normal crop could be harvested. In En Remilly (my annual favourite among the Chassagne Premiers Crus here) the yield was a meagre 3 hl/ha. This resulted in very concentrated and powerful white wines featuring amazing minerality and harmony. The ageing of the wonderful Chevalier-Montrachet is a speciality. The yield (the 0.04 hectares produce between 100 and 200 litres annually) of this renowned Grand Cru site is vinified in a glass balloon. A good indication of the price increases is, according to Antoine Laisney, the cost of purchasing the must for the Corton-Charlemagne which has doubled compared to the 2020!

70% white wine and 30% red wine are normally produced.



White:

Bourgogne Chardonnay	87-88
Chassagne-Montrachet	89-90
Chassagne-Montrachet 1 ^{er} Cru Les Chaumées	90-92
Chassagne-Montrachet 1 ^{er} Cru Les Vergers	90-92+
Chassagne-Montrachet 1 ^{er} Cru La Maltroie	91-92+

Chassagne-Montrachet 1 ^{er} Cru En Remilly	92-94
Puligny-Montrachet 1 ^{er} Cru La Truffière	93-94
Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru	93-94+
Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru	95-96

Red:

Bourgogne Pinot Noir	86-88
Chassagne-Montrachet Vieilles Vignes	88-90
Santenay Vieilles Vignes	89-90
Maranges 1 ^{er} Cru La Fussièrè	87-89

Domaine d'Eugénie

Michel Maillard now produces organically on all his sites. Fermenting with the whole bunches (stalks and stems) is now something of a tradition here. 20% at Villages this year, going up to 70% at Grands-Échézeaux. In 2021, less new wood was used and the barrel ageing was apparently shortened somewhat. The Grand Cru sites were more or less protected from the frost by the use of candles (only 35% losses), but the losses are much higher in the Village/Premier Cru sites. In the 1^{er} Cru Aux Brûlées, production comprised two barrels. There will be nine barrels in 2022.

The Vosne-Romanée Village is an interesting blend of Village sites, young vines from the whole domaine and the lower part of the 1^{er} Cru Aux Brûlées.

Vosne-Romanée	87-89
Vosne-Romanée Clos d'Eugénie	88-90
Vosne-Romanée 1 ^{er} Cru Aux Brûlées	91-92
Échézeaux Grand Cru	92-93
Grands-Échézeaux Grand Cru	93-95
Clos-Vougeot Grand Cru	93-94

Domaine Comtes Georges de Vogüé

A refreshing vintage, says new winemaker Jean Lupatelli. He has inherited the considerable legacy of François Millet (who was in charge for 35 years!) and produced his first vintage brilliantly. For the Bonnes-Mares, whole bunch fermentation was experimented with for the first time. These delicate wines, as charming as they are energetic, will probably be very enjoyable at an early age.

Chambolle-Musigny	89-91
Chambolle-Musigny 1 ^{er} Cru	91-93+
Chambolle-Musigny 1 ^{er} Cru les Amoureuses	93-94+
Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru	92-94+
Musigny Grand Cru	95-96+
Musigny Blanc	93-94

Domaine Tollot-Beaut

A charming and classic set up was presented to us by the likeable Natalie Tollot. She made comparisons with the 2002 vintage - not bad, right? I particularly liked the Savigny-lès-Beaunes. The estate got off relatively lightly with a harvest that yielded 40% less.

Bourgogne Rouge	86-88
Chorey-lès-Beaune	87-88+
Chorey lès Beaune Pièce du Chapitre	88-89
Savigny-lès-Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Les Lavières	89-91
Savigny-lès-Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Champs Gevrey	90-91
Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Clos de Roi	90-92
Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Grèves	90-91
Aloxe-Corton	89-90
Aloxe-Corton 1 ^{er} Cru Les Vercots	90-92
Corton (Combes und Bressandes)	92-94

Domaine Bonneau du Martray

Unfortunately, it was not possible to taste the 2021 wines. The domaine only presents the wines two years after the harvest. So we (re)tasted the electrifying 2020 and the 2018. We were also able to taste what is probably the best red Corton of the last decades. The vinification here has been significantly adapted (less extraction, gentler pressing, etc.).

Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru 2020	97-99+
Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru 2018	96+
Corton (rouge) Grand Cru 2020	93+

Maison Remoissenet Père et Fils

Remoissenet is a medium-sized trading house, but if you subtract the production of the two Givrays and Bourgognes, it is a very small (and sophisticated) operator. Once again, we were able to enjoy the tasting with the extremely entertaining Pierre-Antoine Rovani. The former wine journalist and wine merchant, who has also worked for Parker among others, is an incredibly industrious and fascinating person. The extraordinary increase in quality that has taken hold here since 2007 is breathtaking and has not stopped at this vintage. This is mainly thanks to the quality enthusiast Pierre-Antoine, even if he admits that this is not his favourite vintage. I think this has more to do with the exhausting and nerve-racking negotiations for grape crops and the strong commitment of all forces in their own vineyards. For me, Remoissenet plays in the top league of Burgundy producers, even if the style is more oriented towards opulent drinking pleasure than intellectuality.

Remoissenet now owns a considerable 25 ha, which is 50% of the processed harvest from about 80 plots.

White:

Viré-Clessé	87-89
Pouilly-Fuissé Les Crays	86-88
Pernand-Vergelesses 1 ^{er} Cru Sous Frétille	91-93
Givry	88-89
Santenay 1 ^{er} Cru Clos de Tavannes	91-92
Chassagne-Montrachet	90-91
Meursault	88-90
Chablis 1 ^{er} Cru Fourchaume	88-89+
Meursault 1 ^{er} Cru Les Cras	90-92
Ladoix 1 ^{er} Cru Les Grêchons	90-92
Puligny-Montrachet	90-91
Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru	92-94
Montrachet Grand Cru	94-95+

Red:

Bourgogne	87-88
Savigny-lès-Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Les Serpentières	89-90
Savigny-lès-Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Les Lavières (planted in 1922)	90-92
Pernand-Vergelesses 1 ^{er} Cru Les Vergelesses	89-91
Pommard	88-89
Santenay 1 ^{er} Grand Clos Rousseau	88-90
Beaune 1 ^{er} Cru Les Teurons	89-90
Marsannay Les Échézeaux	87-89
Vosne -Romanée	90-92
Gevrey-Chambertin	90-92
Nuits-Saint-Georges	89-91
Chambolle-Musigny 1 ^{er} Cru Les Échanges	91-92
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Les Cazetiers	91-93
Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru	93-94
Clos Vougeot Grand Cru	92-93



Pierre-Antoine Rovani dans la cuverie de Remoissenet

Domaine Marquis d'Angerville

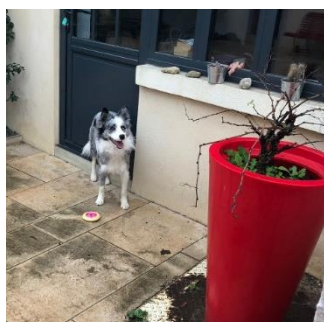
This is a charming old-style traditional estate, says François Duvivier. With an average of 12 hl/ha, we will not be inundated with wines from this domaine either. Here, too, frost was a major factor. However, they had virtually no problems with mildew, as the berries were relatively loose on the bunch. No new wood, except a little in the Clos de Ducs, no chaptalisation. The yields of the Clos des Angles were so minimal that they went into the Premier Cru (without the name of a vineyard).

Bourgogne Passe-tout-grain (50% Gamay)	86-87
Bourgogne	87-88
Volnay	88-90
Volnay 1er Cru	89-91
Volnay 1 ^{er} Cru Fremiet	90-92
Volnay 1 ^{er} Cru Taillepieds	92-93
Volnay 1 ^{er} Cru Champans	92-93
Volnay 1 ^{er} Cru Clos des Ducs	93-94(+)

Domaine Armand Rousseau

The wines here are always vinified and aged according to the same principles as far as possible. This is to make the difference between the vintages more apparent. Thus, the big 3 (Chambertin/Clos-de-Bèze/Clos St. Jacques) always feature 100% new wood in order to tame their massive structures. The domaine faired relatively well with 60% of a normal harvest.

Gevrey-Chambertin Clos du Château	88-89
Gevrey-Chambertin	89-90
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Lavaux Saint Jacques	90-92
Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru	91-92+
Mazy-Chambertin Grand Cru	92-93
Clos de La Roche Grand Cru	92-94
Chambertin Clos des Ruchottes Grand Cru Monopole	93-95
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Clos Saint Jacques	95-96
Chambertin Grand Cru	95-97
Chambertin Clos-de-Bèze Grand Cru	96-97



Surier, the winery dog at Rousseau, never gets tired of playing.

Domaine Denis Mortet

It is no secret that Arnaud Mortet is one of my absolute favourites. I think his wines this year are preferable to those of the renowned neighbouring Domaine Armand Rousseau. He is presumably one of the very few who have made an additional green harvest. This really paid off, because what we had in the glass was marvellous. He is also increasingly using a kind of half-whole-bunch fermentation, which doesn't really have a name. He calls it peticelle - where only the thick inner stem is cut away. It's a huge job that he now undertakes on all the Premiers and Grand Crus (40-80%). For the Village wines, the traditional whole-bunch maceration is used at 30-80%. This year he is making the wines with significantly less new wood than usual. Subtle chaptalisation was also favoured to prolong fermentation. The quantities in the Gevrey-Chambertin 1^{er} Cru Champonnet were so small that they went into Premier Cru without a site designation.

Bourgogne Rouge	87-89
Fixin Vieilles Vignes	90-91
Marsannay Les Longeroies	88-90
Gevrey-Chambertin Mes Cinq Terroirs	90-92
Chambolle-Musigny 1 ^{er} Cru Aux Beaux Bruns	92-93
Gevrey Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru (incl. Champonnets)	92-93
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Les Champeaux	93-94
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Lavaux-St. Jacques	94-95
Mazis-Chambertin Grand Cru	96-97
Clos-de-Vougeot Grand Cru	94-95
Échézeaux Grand Cru	95-96
Bonnes Mares Grand Cru	95-96
Chambertin Grand Cru	97-99

Domaine Claude Dugat

This domaine is known by insiders for doing a great and labour-intensive job in the vineyard. This paid off especially this year. Despite the usual potency here, the wines are very crisp, fresh and utterly charming.

Bertrand has now completely taken over the reins of the domaine from his father Claude, although Claude is, of course, still a presence.

Bourgogne Rouge	87-89
Gevrey-Chambertin	88-91
Gevrey-Chambertin Marie	90-91 +
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru	90-92
Gevrey-Chambertin 1 ^{er} Cru Lavaux St-Jacques	92-93
Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru	93-94
Griottes-Chambertin Grand Cru	94-96
Chapelle-Chambertin Grand Cru	92-93

Domaine Clos Commaraine

In 2017, an American couple bought this small château with an adjacent 3.7 ha monopole of the same name. With their acquisitions, the two always strive to combine superior hospitality with wine. Thus, the current construction site at Château de Commaraine will soon become a luxury hotel. The couple is supported by the industrious Jean-Luc Vitoux.

The quality standards are high. The vines are cultivated biodynamically and Michel Ligier Belair is responsible for the vinification. The plot was divided into eight different sectors (based on soil samples). Only the best sectors will make it into the final blend, everything else will be sold. However, due to the small yields, these were combined into the three cuvées mentioned below. As noted in the last report, Clos Commaraine is an exceptionally polished, graceful and elegant Pommard. A vineyard in Chambolle and two Premier Cru sites in Nuits-Saint-Georges are also new additions to the estate. The vinification is very gentle and nothing is forced. The malolactic fermentation of these wines is not yet completely finished – which makes precise tasting somewhat challenging!

Chambolle-Musigny	88-91
Nuits-Saint-Georges. 1 ^{er} Cru Aux Bouscelots	89-92
Nuits-Saint-Georges 1 ^{er} Cru Roncière	91-92
Pommard 1 ^{er} Cru Clos Commaraine Blend No.1 (upper part)	91-93+
Pommard 1 ^{er} Cru Clos Commaraine Blend No.2 (lower part)	89-91
Pommard 1 ^{er} Cru Clos Commaraine Blend No.3 (middle part)	90-91+

Domaine Leflaive

It is now only possible to taste wines from the Domaine after the second year. This means that the 2021s will not be released for tasting until January 2023. Well...

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