

Clark Foyster

SPECIALIST WINE IMPORTERS

BURGUNDY 2016 EN PRIMEUR

There is good news and there is bad. It's a very fine vintage. It's very small.

- Widespread frost on 26-27 April
- Cool wet spring bringing significant mildew problems until July
- Hot and dry from end July and August
- Ideal harvest conditions

It is always easy for me to be seduced from the barrel-tastings into thinking of all the wines as delicious in early youth. Even in 2015, many wines went into bottle looking delicious. But certainly the top wines will develop slowly, and will need time.

But 2016 is certainly a vintage to drink sooner than 2015. The *premier cru* wines will age well, but the charm in the simpler generic and village wines is seductive and the wines are delicious now.

After the smooth, easy growing season of 2015 (a theme which will be repeated next year with the reports of 2017) we're back to a vintage full of challenges. Frost dominates the picture, closely followed by the problems of mildew as the growing season got further under way. And in the Mâconnais, the demons came in the form of hail - exceptionally early in mid-April - and took out big chunks of Sophie Cinier's Pouilly Fuissé and St Véran.

Frost on 26th April hit Chambolle, Marsannay, Echézeaux, Pommard, Volnay, Meursault. Cyril Audoin in Marsannay reports it as the worst frost since 1981. The shock on the vines combined with cool weather which followed in May delayed bud development and flowering and brought on mildew attacks which continued throughout May, June and into early July. Some organically-minded growers realised that conventional fungicides were needed to stop or at least pause the rot. Nevertheless, Florence and Simon Heresztyn-Mazzini stayed with their new biodynamic principles, and felt, in conclusion, that if they could survive 2016 - which they have!- by following Biodynamics, then Nature is most unlikely to deal them a trickier hand in future. Flowering, when it finally arrived in the second half of June was almost a month later than 2015, so a late harvest was already indicated. And even now rain and sometimes hail continued to cause damage.

But from mid July the summer arrived in force, with a hot dry period through August and into late summer, bringing many characteristics of a warm vintage. Vines' ripening accelerated, and mildew disappeared and sugars began to develop quickly. Some rain in early September prevented the onset of heat stress, and the warm afternoons and cool mornings that followed brought the grapes to harvest under ideal conditions. Most grapes were harvested in the last ten days of September. Something we've noted in recent years -2010 is an interesting example - is that a small crop needs less sun and heat to ripen than a large crop. So, this August heat brought the small crops on the vines quickly towards maturity. As a result, we have a vintage with quite unique conditions. There was no consensus among

growers and a lot of head-scratching when asked to compare 2016 to other vintages. There are the characteristics of a cool vintage and a late harvest: fresh acidities and prominent red-fruit flavours. But there is also the sweet ripeness which we would normally associate with a hotter and earlier harvest. It's an interesting paradox, and I can imagine will continue to mark the vintage as the wines mature.

ALLOCATIONS

From many of the estates featured here we buy what we are offered. We operate a similar principle in allocating to our own customers. If there are trophy wines which are of interest to you, please bear in mind that these are the wines which are the most in demand so we allocate them to regular customers who support us through the rest of the range. We don't have fixed ratios, but we like balanced orders. In the cases of the most sought-after wines: Fourrier, Cathiard, Bertheau, Heresztyn-Mazzini, please bear in mind that we have around half the quantity we had last year. Until we understand how to replicate the "loaves and fishes" miracle please understand that we may have to reduce what we can offer you of the wines.

PRICING

The sale of the 7.5 hectare vineyard, Clos de Tart, for around 200 Million Euros just before our visit in November was a talking point all over Burgundy. It's not difficult to see the influence that a valuation like this, however overheated, has on the pricing of other vineyards and in consequence the bottles produced from these vineyards. It is well-nigh impossible for youngsters without very deep pocket to set themselves up in Burgundy these days.

Faced with another small harvest, there is inevitably a further price increase to pass on, but in most cases the increases are modest. On top of this, we are fortunate that the large 2017 harvest has filled the cellars more than in any year since 2009, and this has modified any larger increases. In two cases (Audoin and Ravaut, both domaines badly affected by the frosts) there are no ex cellars increases.

Our aim in buying Burgundy, and all the other wines we import, is to create relationships with producers for the long-term, and to trust them to understand the reality of our market. Some listen and absorb more carefully than others. But of course we have to listen to producers too, and particularly to take account of small harvests.

Of course if we must have the best, then we must pay, and at the very top end the law of supply and demand applies. Burgundy is unique, both the people and the wines, and we all love what they produce. Nowhere can come close to this style and quality of wine, and they know this.

This leaves us with a FX increase to factor into the calculations, and this will increase the Sterling price of the wines by a small percentage compared with the 2015 offer.

But there are still bargains to be found. Look carefully at the wines of Audoin (Marsannay), Ravaut (Ladoix, Corton) and Sophie Cinier (Mâcon, Pouilly Fuissé). These producers offer terrific value by any standards.

Prices which follow are quoted in £ Sterling per bottle and per case of six and include shipment from the winery into our bonded warehouse. Onward carriage to the customer's delivery address will be charged separately. Most wines come in cases of six or twelve, a few in cases of three. We have shown all case prices as six for the sake of comparison; we cannot guarantee that all cases will be available as six packs.

Shipment will take place in Spring and Autumn 2018. Wines will all be despatched or made ready for collection by customers as soon as possible after receipt in the UK as we are unable to offer storage to our customers.

Lance Foyster MW

Domaine Charles Audoin, Marsannay-la-Côte

Cyril Audoin is a fifth generation winemaker from this 14ha family domaine in the northern-most wine village of the Côtes de Nuits. He is a golf and rugby-loving, laid-back, relaxed young man, but he is also a focused and precise winemaker. He would like to have come to the tasting this year, but will be hitting golf balls around a Florida course as we are tasting his wines. With his American wife Britney and their young daughter Charley, they find January the best moment to escape for a dose of sun.

There was catastrophic frost damage throughout Marsannay and Domaine Audoin suffered terribly. Yields in red are 70% reduced from last year, and whites by 90%. The north of the appellation was less hit than the south, so we still have a reasonable allocation of Longeroies and Clos du Roy, though there is no Favières, Charme aux Prêtres, Champ Salomon or Clos de Jeu this year. All the fruit from these vineyards have been put together into the grand total of four barrels, totalling 900 litres, and will appear eventually as Cuvée Charley.

But what is left is seriously good. The freshness of the vintage is apparent, but so is the warmth, and there is a charming sweet ripeness to all the wines, with very ripe unobtrusive tannins. Cyril is a proud ambassador for Marsannay and always determined to show how well his wines age. But he accepts that 2016 are wines which will give enormous pleasure over the next few years.

There is confidence and modesty here in balance and the wines are of exceptionally high quality. The 'village' wine, Cuvée Marie Ragonneau, is a blend of parcels, to contrast with the single vineyard wines which are all in line for 1er Cru status over the next few years. For now, they each cost significantly less than the village wines from further south.

		bottle	case of 6
AUBOR16B	Bourgogne Rouge	£11.50	£69.00
AUMAR16B	Marsannay, Cuvée Marie Ragonneau	£17.00	£102.00
AUMLO16B	Marsannay, Les Longeroies	£22.00	£132.00
AUMCR16B	Marsannay, Clos du Roy	£22.00	£132.00
AUFLR16B	Fixin, Le Rozier	£23.50	£141.00

Domaine Fourrier, Gevrey Chambertin:

We have our smallest ever allocation in 2016, around a half compared with last year. Please understand the inevitable result on quantities we can offer. Next year we hope will be different! We also have a price increase from the estate but this is the first since 2012.

There is a new member of the team here. François is Jean-Marie's new right hand. For a small estate with the reputation of Domaine Fourrier, we can only imagine the pressures and demands upon Jean-Marie's time from his clients and fans around the world, so this seems an excellent solution to spread the responsibilities. We are looking forward to seeing Jean-Marie in London in the spring for a Fourrier dinner.

The frost reduced the Chambolle-Musigny crop by half this year, and in Gevrey it was not much better. Then after the frost, the mildew took its toll and flowering came late at the end of June. The skins were thick, and the berries very small. Harvest took place at the very end of September.

The wines still have the Fourrier hallmark of sparkling energy and crispness, though the ripe character of the vintage is also very apparent.

N.B. Gevrey Vieille Vigne is bottled with Diam corks.

		bottle	case of 6
DFBOB16B	Bourgogne Blanc	£16.50	£99.00
DFMSD16B	Morey St Denis, Clos Solon	£35.50	£213.00
DFGCH16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Vieille Vigne	£38.00	£228.00
DFGCC16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Cherbaudes	£81.00	£486.00
DFGCG16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Les Goulots	£88.00	£528.00
DFCAM16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Combe aux Moines	£88.00	£528.00
DFCSJ16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Clos St Jacques	£198.00	£1,188.00
DFGRI16B	Griotte Chambertin, Grand Cru	£220.00	n/a

Domaine Heresztyn-Mazzini, Gevrey Chambertin:

Florence and Simon reported a very challenging growing season. As luck (?) would have it, they chose 2016 to apply the biodynamic viticultural practices they had been trialling in the last three years to the whole estate. That they came through unscathed, and with a cellarful of beautiful wines is tribute to their hard work and dedication. It was a vintage which tested many organic and biodynamically-minded growers, but their feeling now is that if they could succeed organically in 2016, then they will survive anything Nature may throw at them in future. They made a total of 16 treatments through the growing season. Most of these were to combat the mildew but it was double the number of treatments needed in the easier 2015 and 2017 vintages.

Changes continue here as the new generation continues to stamp its mark. Florence is reducing chaptalisation, reducing sulphur additions, and is still thrilled by whole bunch vinification. In most of the wines she is using around 50% of whole bunches, and dreams of the vintage where she will be able to make 100% whole bunch cuvee.

It's another great success for a *domaine* which risen impressively over the past five years.

N.B. The wines this year are sealed with Ardea closures (www.ardeaseal.com).

		bottle	case of 6
DHGCH16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Vieilles Vignes	£32.50	£195.00
DHGCV16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Clos Village	£36.00	£216.00
DHGCS16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Les Songes	£35.50	£213.00
DHG CJ16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Les Jouises	£35.50	£213.00
DHGCP16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru La Perrière	£50.50	£303.00
DHGCG16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Les Goulots	£50.50	£303.00
DHGCC16B	Gevrey Chambertin, 1er Cru Les Champonnets	£50.50	£303.00
DHMOM16B	Morey St Denis, 1er Cru Les Millandes	£52.50	£315.00
DHCSD16B	Clos St Denis, Grand Cru	£115.00	£690.00

Domaine Henri Jouan, Morey St Denis:

Philippe was luckier than most in 2016. He suffered the inevitable Chambolle frost, and in his Derrière le Four vineyard he harvested only nine boxes of grapes instead of the usual fifty. But apart from a small hit in Clos St Denis, the rest of the vineyards were unaffected. In terms of our allocation, we are sheltered from a significant reduction this year, as Philippe has sold less wine in barrel to Joseph Drouhin. (Their Clos St Denis is almost entirely from Philippe's vineyard). The estate has worked with Drouhin for over fifty years but the proportion bottled now under the Domaine Jouan label increases each year. 2016 is a vintage with a great freshness and fruit purity. The 8-10% whole bunches might be a cause of this, and perhaps a slightly earlier harvest, but the wines have great energy and the hallmark of Jouan wines; a supple fruity drink-me now charm.

There is talk of reclassifying a small part of Philippe's Gevrey aux Echézeaux vineyard into Charmes Chambertin Grand Cru. I remember Philippe's father Henri telling me about his campaign to upgrade a part of the parcel on my very first visit to the *domaine* nine years ago so it looks as though this might finally come into practice in 2018 or 2019 (maybe!)

Old vines here. 60 years at Clos St Denis and 70 at Clos Sorbé.

		bottle	case of 6
DJCOB16B	Côteaux Bourguignons	£10.50	£63.00
DJMSD16B	Morey St Denis	£29.50	£177.00
DJCHM16B	Chambolle Musigny	£38.00	£228.00
DJGCH16B	Gevrey Chambertin, Aux Echézeaux	£35.50	£213.00
DJMCS16B	Morey St Denis, 1er Cru Clos Sorbé	£63.00	£378.00
DJCSD16B	Clos St Denis, Grand Cru	£113.00	£678.00

Domaine François Bertheau, Chambolle Musigny:

As an estate entirely located in Chambolle Musigny, where the frost hit hardest, it's not surprising that François' crop was so significantly reduced. The damage reduced all the vineyards, but particularly the various parcels for the village wine, as well as the Premier Cru and the Bonnes Mares. As the *domaine* sells out all its stock en primeur these days, our allocation reflects that. We have a half of what we were allocated last year.

But tantalisingly, these are smashing wines. Vibrant, crunchy, crisp, but super ripe and sweet. Tannins never seem like a hugely important component in these wines, but they are certainly there, though they melt into the overall flavour and texture of the wine better than ever.

Not for François the temptation to fiddle with a winemaking process which works for him well each year, so no whole bunches, and the same vinification and maturation as usual. Roughly 20% new oak is used across the whole range with the exception of the two newish large *foudres* of 27 hectolitres. The wines undergo malolactic fermentation in tank, and pass into barrel in February for 12 months.

This is a domaine where very little is done to 'make' the wine, though the wines exude the sense of a sympathetic and very delicate hand. The wines will be bottled in early February.

		bottle	case of 6
FBCHM16B	Chambolle Musigny	£42.00	£252.00
FBCPC16B	Chambolle Musigny, 1er Cru	£56.50	£339.00
FBCMC16B	Chambolle Musigny, 1er Cru Les Charmes	£77.00	£462.00
FBCMA16B	Chambolle Musigny, 1er Cru Les Amoureuses	£195.00	£1,170.00
FBBOM16B	Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru	£210.00	£1,260.00

Domaine Confuron-Gindre, Vosne Romanée:

Part of Echézeaux (the Treux parcel) was badly hit by the frost. The other parcel (Rouge du Bas) was unaffected. Beaumonts was also hit, but across the rest of the *domaine* our allocation is not reduced. In fact we have a little more Bourgogne Rouge and village Vosne, as the family has now finished selling any wine in bulk, and is now bottling everything under their name. It's a pity that their Premier Cru holdings are so small relative to the village wines, (they make only 2 barrels of Brûlées: 600 bottles) but we are grateful for what we receive. The Chaumes vineyard is 100 years old next year.

François and Claudine's son Edouard is entrusted with the promotion of the estate at our tasting this year. He has been part of the family team for three years now, and has a bright future as this *domaine* continues to move forward through the ranks.

The style is a little more muscular than some producers, but the wines are concentrated and dense and age really well. The wines are made in a cold cellar, so malolactic fermentations come slowly, and the wines are often more backward at this time of the year than some others. From such a prestigious village, these wines are not expensive.

		bottle	case of 6
CGBOR16B	Bourgogne Rouge	£9.00	£54.00
CGGCH16B	Gevrey Chambertin	£29.00	£174.00
CGNSG16B	Nuits St Georges	£29.00	£174.00
CGVOR16B	Vosne Romanée	£30.50	£183.00
CGVRC16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Chaumes	£47.00	£282.00
CGVBR16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Les Brûlées	£47.00	£282.00
CGVBE16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Les Beaumonts	£47.00	£282.00
CGECH16B	Echézeaux, Grand Cru	£75.00	£450.00

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard et Fils, Vosne Romanée:

There's an addition to the range this year: a tiny parcel of Gamay/Pinot from the Hautes Côtes for a Côteaux Bourguignons. But this hardly makes up for the drastic frost and mildew reduction across the rest of the range. In the different vineyards both of these problems had significant influence over yield, so here again we have a lower allocation than at any time in recent years. Please understand the effect this will have on what we can offer.

Sébastien hit the ground running in 2011 in his first vintage unsupervised by his father, Sylvain, and there have been impressive developments in the subsequent vintages. There have been subtle changes to viticulture, winemaking and *élevage*. For a quietly-spoken young man it's very clear that he knows where he is going. Perhaps more than his father, he's making wines to age and wines which actually need time.

Even in a vintage of charm and accessibility like 2016, these are powerful ambitious wines which will need time. This is Sébastien's chosen direction. He likes a slow malolactic which he managed again this year, and the wines will remain in barrel until March for an April bottling.

		bottle	case of 6
SCCOB16B	Côteaux Bourguignons	£13.50	£81.00
SCBOR16B	Bourgogne Rouge	£22.00	£132.00
SCNSG16B	Nuits St Georges	£47.00	£282.00
SCVOR16B	Vosne Romanée	£50.00	£300.00
SCCHM16B	Chambolle Musigny, Clos de l'Orme	£54.00	£324.00
SCNUT16B	Nuits St Georges, 1er Cru Aux Thorey	£90.00	£540.00
SCNUM16B	Nuits St Georges, 1er Cru Aux Murgers	£101.00	£606.00
SCVRO16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru En Orveaux	£108.00	£648.00
SCVRR16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Reignots	£108.00	£648.00
SCVRS16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Suchots	£128.00	£768.00
SCVRM16B	Vosne Romanée, 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts	£188.00	n/a
SCRSV16B	Romanée St Vivant, Grand Cru	£469.00	n/a

Domaine Ravaut, Ladoix/Corton:

We have done well with Vincent Ravaut's wines in the last 12 months. If the big names of Burgundy are quickly disappearing out of sight in affordability, it's crucial to be able to offer really fine Burgundy, from classic terroirs at realistic prices. Ravaut is predominantly a red wine estate, but we have a little of the iconic Corton Charlemagne, and, almost as impressive, the Ladoix Les Hautes Mourottes, a mere stone's throw from the edge of Corton Charlemagne.

It's worth pointing out that single domaine wines are a relatively recent development in the wine history of Burgundy, but that chez Ravaut this process was begun in the 1920's by the original Gaston Ravaut and his son, Pierre.

Vincent and Céline Ravaut are now running the family domaine where Vincent has worked with his father since 2007. They straddle the fault line between Côtes de Beaune and Nuits, with most of their wines in the southerly region. Frost hit the estate in 2016, but here it mainly affected the lesser wines. The flowering period was quite stretched out, leading to irregular ripening, but in the end ripeness levels were high, and continued to rise quickly until the end of September harvest. The reds are supple, ripe and plump. The Ladoix and Corton red wines will drink young and are delicious. Aloxe Corton 1er Cru (a blend of Paulands and Fournières) is firmer and will need a little longer, but here too there are ripe and fleshy flavours.

		bottle	case of 6
DRLBB16B	Ladoix, Les Hautes Mourottes (blanc)	£29.50	£177.00
DRCCH16B	Corton-Charlemagne, Grand Cru (blanc)	£55.00	£330.00
DRCDN16B	Côte de Nuits Villages	£14.00	£84.00
DRLBR16B	Ladoix, 1er Cru Le Bois Roussot	£19.50	£117.00
DRACP16B	Aloxe Corton, 1er Cru	£25.50	£153.00
DRCBR16B	Corton Bressandes, Grand Cru	£41.50	£249.00

NEW! Domaine Thierry Violot-Guillemard, Pommard:

This is a fifth generation, 6.5 hectare estate, predominantly based in Pommard, with a few vines in Beaune, Meursault and Volnay. It's predominantly a red wine estate, but we have bought a little Beaune Blanc in 2016 and look forward to Meursault and a new St Aubin blanc next year. Thank you to Edouard Confuron for the introduction. It was a great recommendation.

The estate is run by Thierry and Estelle Violot-Guillemard. They will be handing over to their son Joannès in the next few years, but for now they are busily overseeing work to extend the cellar which will give them space to accommodate the abundant 2017 vintage. We can understand why this has been put off during the last five famously lean years in the Côte de Beaune, but finally now they really need the space.

In addition to their own vines, Thierry has some informal arrangements with neighbours and friends to buy fruit. This has been particularly helpful during these recent small vintages. So, two of the *premiers crus*: Pommard Arvelets and Volnay Santenots are technically *négociant* wines.

In a conversation with Thierry on red wines, the word "finesse" crops up regularly. Indeed this is immediately obvious in tasting. The old fashioned view of Pommard I remember was of an appellation dominated by tannin, and sometimes rustic over-extraction. (Or "structure" if you are from a different school of thought). There is structure in the wines - plenty in the case of Rugiens, one of the village's designated Grand Crus, if ever the day comes. But these are gentle wines, where the balance of the fragrance and perfume of pinot, allied to savoury mineral flavours, create wines of real charm and delicacy. Certainly Rugiens and Santenots will need a little time, but the Pommard Brescuel and Pommard La Platière (80 year vines and next to Les Arvelets) will bring great pleasure quite soon. Vines are almost all old (60+ years) and the estate has been certified organic since 1999. Everything is destemmed, there is a three to four day cold-soak, then a daily pumping over and punch-down during fermentation. The red wines ferment solely with natural yeasts. By modern standards, quite a lot of new oak - 60% - is used, from coopers François Frères and Damy. But the toast is very light, and the seasoning of the wood is extended to four to five years, which results in a barely perceptible oak influence. They are unfinned and unfiltered.

I have no trouble confessing the CFW buying criteria follow my own preferences, and this is an estate I am looking forward to drinking thirstily at home.

		bottle	case of 6
VGBBL16B	Beaune Blanc En Montagne St Désiré	£22.50	£135.00
VGBMD16B	Bourgogne Les Maisons Dieu	£14.25	£85.50
VGPEB16B	Pommard En Brescul	£30.00	£180.00
VGPLA16B	Pommard, 1er Cru Les Arvelets	£40.00	£240.00
VGPLP16B	Pommard, 1er Cru La Platière	£40.00	£240.00
VGVSA16B	Volnay, 1er Cru Santenots	£38.25	£229.50
VGPLR16B	Pommard, 1er Cru Les Rugiens	£56.25	£337.50
VGCMR16B	Beaune Rouge, 1er Cru Clos des Mouches	£38.25	£229.50

Domaine Sophie Cinier, Pouilly-Fuissé:

For Sophie Cinier in the Mâconnais, there was no frost in 2016, but her challenge came in the form of hail. An exceptionally early storm in mid April ripped through and destroyed the young buds and shoots in Pouilly-Fuissé, St Véran and Mâcon-Fuissé. So here too in a different way nature caught us.

Sophie has only 2.5 hectares of her own vines, a part of which were damaged. But she also has a négociant business which buys grapes from friends and other contacts, so she was able to make up the shortfall (and a little more) and this year there is a new Mâcon-Verzé and a St Véran from a different vineyard. Whites are very good here again in 2016. There's a very lively acidity and tautness to these wines which mirrors citrusy notes of 2014. There's good, ripe mouth-filling concentration too.

She has again separated one of her favourite vineyards, the 62 year old La Dame Charnay, with its tiny berries and old vines to produce her Pouilly-Fuissé Collection. Then there are the 82 year old vines from Pouilly-Fuissé Vers Crâs, a parcel of 0.3 hectares, producing eight barrels (2,000 bottles) and the 100 year old vines of Pouilly Vinzelles, Les Longeays, producing just three barrels.

As usual, Vers Crâs and Les Longeays are not yet bottled. The other wines were bottled in June and September.

		bottle	case of 6
CIMVE16B	Mâcon-Verzé	£9.25	£55.50
CIVCL16B	Viré-Clessé	£13.50	£81.00
CISTV16B	St Véran	£12.50	£75.00
CIPOF16B	Pouilly Fuissé Classique	£15.50	£93.00
CIPOC16B	Pouilly-Fuissé Collection	£16.50	£99.00
CIPVC16B	Pouilly-Fuissé, Vers Crâs	£19.25	£115.50
CIPVL16B	Pouilly-Vinzelles, Les Longeays	£19.25	£115.50