

# WINE News

*Burgundy: Hidden gems from ancient soils—plus pre-arrival pricing on top Chablis.*



## JUNE 6, 2016 FEATURES

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## Good News/Bad News from Burgundy!

By Trey Beffa

**Perfect timing!** Alex Pross and I just returned from a successful week in Burgundy, tasting many wines from the 2014 and 2015 vintages. The bad news first: Quantities. Every vintage starting with 2010 has been a short harvest. Thanks to a late spring frost that hit the region on the night of April 26 this year, the 2016 vintage is already being described by some as a “disaster” in terms of quantities. The good news: In general, the 2014 reds have surprised many winemakers in Burgundy. They have lovely fruit, good freshness, and have developed a surprising amount of body and depth. And the 2014 whites are fabulous! They show great

acidity, tension and richness. The whites are high in acid and should be the vintage to age in the cellar if you are a fan of older white Burgundy. As for the 2015 vintage, several winemakers told us they believe the red wines may be a once-in-a-lifetime vintage. Négociant Alain Corcia believes it is the greatest vintage he has ever tasted out of barrel. It was another very good year for whites, as well. The 2015 whites are loaded with ripe fruit. In the mouth they are round, rich and creamy. Acidity in the 2015s is quite a bit lower than in the 2014s, so these wines will be drinking well right out of the gate.

## Pre-Arrival Gems from Burgundy!

**2014 Domaine Vincent Dauvissat Chablis (\$59.99 PA)** I had a chance to taste this wine out of barrel in October last year: Bright, tight, very high acid, but I love the freshness and purity! Clean and crisp. And Stephen Tanzer writes: “Aromas of crushed rock and ginger. Sweet, ripe and satisfying, offering considerable early appeal to its stone fruit and spice flavors. Much more tender than the Petit Chablis and totally different in style. Should make an outstanding and complete village wine.” Due in November, 2016.

**2014 Domaine d’Eugénie Clos Vougeot Grand Cru (\$259.99 PA)** The first vintage under the Domaine d’Eugenie label was 2006, shortly after the owner of Château Latour purchased the property. Much work has gone on at the property since. Alex and I tasted this wine on our trip. Notes: Aromatic upfront with a solid core of mid-palate fruit, hints of spice, cola and a touch of mint—this wine has lots of concentration and depth of fruit. 92-95 points from Allen Meadows, as well! Due in December, 2016.

**2014 Denis Mortet Gevrey-Chambertin “Mes Cinq Terroirs” (\$69.99 PA)** A great buy from another of my favorite producers! 91-93 points from Wine Advocate: “The 2014 Gevrey-Chambertin Mes Cinq Terroirs is a blend of all Arnaud’s Gevrey-Chambertin holdings. Matured in 30% to 35% new oak, it has a brisk, stony red berry bouquet with attractive undergrowth scents percolating through. Very natural—this is an excellent Gevrey that comes highly recommended.” This wine is due in September, 2016.

## All Smiles for Château Vitallis

By Heather Gowen

One of the best things we do at K&L is go out to the field and find “hidden gems.” It’s not every day we stumble upon a great wine in these forays, especially not in Burgundy where everything is so well known. But there are still treasures to be found in the Mâcon, where vineyards are not minutely subdivided, and small producers fly under the radar. There are great wines to be found—and at great prices.

Our most recent acquisition is Château Vitallis. In classic Burgundian fashion, the Dutron family has been growing vines since 1835, and now owns some of the oldest and best parcels in the village of Fuissé in the Pouilly-Fuissé district. Our buyers happened upon the château during a trip to Burgundy last October, and it was quite evident upon their return that they’d found something special. Perhaps it was the haste with which the samples were chilled and opened, or the irrepressible smiles, but this was evidently a good breakthrough for our Burgundy buying team.

In the glass, the wines live up to the hype: subtle, like any good white Burgundy, but complex, mineral-driven and poised. The **2014 Vitallis Pouilly-Fuissé (\$19.99)** will quite likely be a new crab season favorite, as it is both lean and ample, with a tangy, saline quality, complemented by a softening touch of ripe pear and vanilla. On this wine, Denis Dutron uses both stainless steel and French oak—typically with minimal amounts of new oak—to lend richness and texture to the wine, without overpowering the fruit.



Looking over the vineyards at Château Vitallis with Maxime Dutron.

The second wine we brought in from Vitallis is also a Pouilly-Fuissé, but is designated “Vieilles Vignes,” or old vines. Here the winemaking is slightly different, as is the resultant wine. Since these grapes hail from vines aged 45-70 years old, the must is intensely concentrated in flavor. Denis uses all French oak, again with minimal new oak, and he also employs traditional “batonnage” practice, stirring the lees through the wine to create a richer textural feel that plays well off the intensity of the fruit. Overall a more intense and structured wine, the **2014 Vitallis Pouilly-Fuissé Vieilles Vignes (\$23.99)** is a wine that is immediately intriguing, but will also reward a few years of cellaring.

## Gateway White Burgundies for California Chardonnay Drinkers

By Dulcinea Gonzalez

Venturing out of a California Chardonnay drinking comfort zone into white Burgundy can be totally enlightening, enjoyable and surprisingly economical. We have three terroir-driven Burgundian producers expressing distinct styles at reasonable price points that are sure to please wine drinkers on both sides of the fence!

The **2014 Domaine Andre Moingeon & Fils Puligny-Montrachet “Alain Corcia” (\$42.99)** provides a “sweet spot” in the value category.

Those looking for a bit of buttery creaminess in their glass will want to take note—generally, more richness in white Burgundies comes with a more serious price tag, but that is not the case with the Alain Corcia. Here you find a modern style of Burgundy with forward aromas of ripe fruit and medium-toasted oak, with notes of hazelnut, baked apple and croissant. The texture is luxurious and will definitely appeal to those accustomed to a more traditional Californian oak treatment. Still, the Puligny-Montrachet mineral character and harmonious acidity shine through, keeping this rich and round without being overdone. This is a great splurge-worthy dinner pick, and also an excellent contender for medium-term aging.



The **2013 Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey Bourgogne Blanc (\$29.99)** is next. This is an affordable yet elegant

entry point into the world of well-respected grower and winemaker Pierre-Yves Colin Morey, whose portfolio of terroir-focused wines are well worth exploring. His winemaking philosophy is built on a minimalist approach, and the Bourgogne Blanc is free of batonnage and fermented in larger demi-muid oak barrels, which reduces wood influence and allows the purity of fruit to speak for itself. The wine is sourced from young vines in Puligny-Montrachet and St-Aubin, making this a great example of how a simple Bourgogne can be a poised, expressive, pleasure-driven experience. Clean and balanced with a touch of white-fleshed fruit, stony mineral qualities and perky acidity, this Bourgogne blanc is nicely structured, with an intense, lengthy finish. This is a perfect sunny day sipper or pairing partner with your favorite poultry or seafood dish.



Also check out the **2014 JJ Vincent Bourgogne Blanc (\$17.99)**, a vivacious everyday drinker that shows off the rich and ripe fruit character of the Mâconnais region in southern Burgundy.

## The 2014 Jacques Bavard Wines Have Arrived!

By Trey Beffa

**We started working with Jacques Bavard in the 2008 vintage.**

Bavard is a small négociant in Puligny-Montrachet who is dedicated to working with organic and biodynamic growers. His wines always show a wonderful purity of fruit along with balance and freshness. His 2014s may be the finest vintage we have had a chance to offer!

**2014 Jacques Bavard Bourgogne Blanc (\$19.99)** This wine is always the wine that sells out most quickly. The 2014 is very open and approachable. It shows a lovely middle richness and creamy texture that gives way to a crisp, fresh finish. Wonderful acidity this vintage!

**2014 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses Blanc “Les Clous” (\$29.99)** The Les Clous shows a rich and round mouthfeel with hints of melon, pear and a touch of cream. It is the rounder, softer entry that makes it probably his most “user-friendly” wine. Still, as with the majority of 2014s the finish is crisp and vibrant!

**2014 Jacques Bavard St-Romain Blanc (\$29.99)** A blend of fruit from the vineyards Sous la Velle and Sous la Château. The St-Romain village is known for its cool climate and rocky soils. Lots of minerals and hints of citrus are followed by a long, spicy finish.

**2014 Jacques Bavard St-Romain Blanc “Sous le Château” (\$29.99)** This wine comes from one of the best sites in St-Romain, Sous le Château, and shows the most potential for a bit of cellaring. It is very tight and focused with tons of acidity and mineral hints that carry through to the finish. It shows excellent verve and tension.

**2014 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses Rouge (\$24.99)** This vintage shows a bright cherry character, with fine-grained tannins, lovely perfume and spice along with a very red-fruited, long finish. It is fresh and lively. Perfect wine for summer sipping and will pair well with a variety of food.

**2014 Jacques Bavard Santenay Rouge (\$27.99)** This is a new wine for Bavard. It shows a bit more concentration, depth of fruit and grip. The fruit here is also a bit darker and more mineral. Another excellent food wine!



*Tasting with Jacques Bavard in his cellars.*

## Tonight, I Drink My Favorite Thing—Affordable Burgundy!

By Daniel Maas

**OK, here's the situation:** It is nine o'clock on Saturday morning, and it's already going to be an expensive day, as I seem to have woken up to find I have both a parking ticket and a broken air conditioner. It's clear that by this evening, I'm going to need a drink—maybe even two! And clearly, between my lack of parking skills and a desire for cooler air, tonight I'll be drinking on the cheap, which is just fine by me—because tonight, I drink *Burgundy!*

But don't you shake your head in disbelief. Gone are the days when good Burgundy has to cost a lot. Allow me to present three examples:

First up, the **2014 Maison Roche de Bellene Bourgogne Rouge Vieilles Vignes (\$19.99)**, a wonderful result of 60-year-old vines that express deep aromas of red berry fruit, a surprising degree of earthiness, and a fine, soft texture that leads you into a lingering finish. Taking care to farm his land biodynamically, winemaker Nicolas Potel (who founded this négociant in 2008 after working for many years at his family estate) has created a prime example of a lively and fresh style of Pinot Noir that is the perfect selection for a stingy Saturday.

Could my choice be that easy? A home run right out of the gate? I thought so, until I tasted the **2014 Domaine Tortochot Bourgogne Rouge “Cuvee Fine Selection” (\$19.99)**. Ostensibly declassified

Gevrey-Chambertin (a favorite village of mine), this is an example of the power and elegance that can come from *young* vines. That's right—this small parcel was planted in 2005, and is already producing grapes that express everything I look for in wines from this area. Medium-bodied, with silky tannins, dark cherry and a subtle hint of smokiness that show through here in perfect harmony. This is a serious wine, and one that I am eager to see develop over the next five years.

Just when I thought my decision on what to drink tonight could not get tougher, here comes an amazing Burgundy at a great price—the **2013 Gabriel Billard Bourgogne Rouge “Cuvée Milliane” (\$21.99)**, named for the grandmother of proprietors Mireille Desmonet and Claudie Jobard, carries with it every tent-pole quality of great French Pinot Noir. To put it more simply, it has everything: Lively cherry, substantial power and grip, and a long finish interweaved with that pervading cedar essence that I've often found in the best wines of Pommard (the main source of this fruit). For this price, this is a most complex and thorough example of the region's famed style.

Well, there you have it. Is it possible to spend a lot of money on great Burgundy wines? Of course! Do you need to? Absolutely not! Why not open a few of these options and see that I'm right?



## Chablis: The Little Gem of Burgundy

By Alex Pross

Chablis is the northernmost appellation in Burgundy, and is actually closer to Champagne than to the heart of the Côte d'Or. The appellation was created in 1938, but its viticultural history traces back to Roman times. In the early nineteenth century, Chablis had as many as 40,000 hectares planted. But disease struck the vineyards, and the region suffered from competition from other regions when new railroads allowed them to transport their wines more easily to Paris. By the 1950s Chablis had shrunk to just 500 hectares. Fortunes turned around in the 1960s thanks to better frost protection, and the accelerated vineyard replanting that followed revived this dynamic region.

To call Chablis picturesque is an understatement. Beautiful, hilly vineyards of varying shades of green dot the landscape as you drive along the one-lane road that meanders around turns, exposing the visitor to one great vineyard view after another. Here, we feature two of the top producers in all of Chablis.

Billaud-Simon was purchased in 2014 by the Faiveley family, owners of Domaine Faiveley in Nuits-St-Georges. The Faiveleys recognized that though Chablis has been producing excellent wines, there was still room to improve and create breathtaking offerings. The **2014 Billaud-Simon Chablis (\$29.99)** (in-stock) is delightful from the start, with aromas of lime blossom, flint and yellow flowers that lead to an energetic palate of citrus, iodine and mineral flavors, all of which are framed by zippy acidity. 90 points RP. Next up we have the **2014 Domaine Billaud-Simon Chablis "Tete d'Or" (\$32.99)** (in-stock). 93 points WS. Two-thirds of the wine originates from the lieu-dit directly below the Chapelot lieu-dit in Montée de Tonnerre, which is one of the top premier cru vineyards. Rich, with a hint of oak, this Chablis has iodine, white flowers and green apple notes with great length and a vibrant, long finish. This is a mouthwatering, taut wine that epitomizes what Chablis is capable of.

We also have a very limited offering of premier and grand cru 2014 Billaud-Simon offerings on pre-arrival listed at the bottom of this page.

Christian Moreau can trace its beginning in Chablis back to 1814, but it was not until 2002 that the domaine was able to bottle wines from their extensive estate holdings under the Christian Moreau Père et Fils name. The only wine not made from 100% domaine-owned vineyard fruit is the **2014 Domaine Christian Moreau Chablis (\$24.99)** (in-stock). 89-91 points VN, 88-91 points BH. Intensely floral, with salty/chalky aromas. The palate is bright and focused, with fresh lime and crushed stone flavors that blend nicely with the racy acidity and bright melon notes. We also have very limited offerings of premier and grand cru offerings of 2014 Christian Moreau on pre-arrival.



### 2014 Billaud-Simon Chablis Pre-Arrival

**Montée de Tonnerre 1er Cru (\$44.99)** 92-94 points BH, 91-94 points VN.

**Les Preuses Grand Cru (\$79.99)** 92-95 points BH, 90-92 points VN.

**Vaudésir Grand Cru (\$79.99)** 92-94 points BH, 91-94 points VN.

**Les Clos Grand Cru (\$79.99)** 93-96 points BH, 90-93 points VN.

### 2014 Christian Moreau Chablis Pre-Arrival

**Les Clos "Clos des Hospices" Grand Cru (\$69.99)** 92-94 points RP, 92-94 points VN, 92-94 points BH.

**Les Clos Grand Cru (\$59.99)** 92-95 points VN, 91-93 points BH.

**Valmur Grand Cru (\$59.99)** 93-95 points RP, 91-94 points BH.

**Vaudésir Grand Clos (\$59.99)** 93-95 points RP, 91-94 points VN, 91-93 points BH.

### K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

**P** (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687

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