

Burgundy Basics

- Geography
- History: Why Burgundy Is the Way It Is
- Organization
 - Varietals
 - Chablis, Côte d'Or, Côte Chalonnaise, Mâconnais, Beaujolais
 - Bourgogne Rouge/Blanc, Villages, 1er Cru, Grand Cru
 - Vintages and Producers
- What to Look For: Value v. Collecting; Ready-to-Drink v. Cellaring



History: Why Burgundy Is the Way It Is

- Roman Empire records date production back to 200 AD
- 500-1600s: Vineyards mainly in hands of Christian monasteries and monks
- 1700s: Fragmentation of vineyards among many owners
 - Some vineyards move to private ownership
 - French Revolution and Napoleonic Code
 - Rise of négociants
- 1930s: Start of domaine bottling



Starting Easy: Varietals

- Red = Pinot Noir
- White = Chardonnay
- Others:
 - Gamay (red)
 - Aligoté (white)

Organization: Appellations

- Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée
→ Appellation d'Origine Protégée
 - Area
 - Varietal
 - Yield
 - Ripeness
 - Vineyard management
 - Winemaking techniques

Regions:

- Chablis
- Côte d'Or
- Côte Chalonnaise
- Mâconnais
- Beaujolais

- Bourgogne Rouge and Blanc
- Villages and *lieux dits*
- Premier (1er) Crus
- Grand Crus

Côte d'Or: The Golden Slope

- Côte de Nuits communes...
 - Almost all Pinot Noir
 - Vineyards within communes broken up into Grand, 1er, Villages
- Côte de Beaune communes...
 - Pinot Noir and Chardonnay
 - Almost exclusively Chardonnay in Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Chassagne-Montrachet
 - Vineyards within communes broken up into Grand, 1er, Villages



Recent Vintages

- **2010:** “Classic” character; fresh and balanced acid/ripeness
- **2009:** Warm; great ripeness, very open now yet will also age well; best for reds
- **2008:** Variable weather; structured but lean reds; whites are both ripe and high acidity
- **2007:** Cooler; lighter reds; great, high acid whites
- **2006:** Lighter, softer reds for earlier drinking; very fresh whites
- **2005:** Warm year; great for powerful reds that will age; fruity but lower acid whites
- **2004:** Rainy, cool; structured but not super fruity reds and whites
- **2003:** Extremely hot; richly fruited reds and whites; low acid
- **2002:** Fair weather; very well-balanced reds and whites
- **2001:** Cool and wet; less ripeness but more earth/mineral

...and the importance of the producer...

Tasting components

(Specific wines chosen and poured in each class.)

What are you looking for: Value? Ready to drink?

Collecting and aging?

- Know what you like/what you want and know how to ask for it
- Find a salesperson you trust
- Begin to learn the communes’ characteristics
- Be mindful of provenance
- Remember vintages: “off” for value, “acclaimed” for collecting
- Remember quality level: Grand or 1er for collecting, village or lower for drinking sooner
- (That said, *always* expect surprises!)

