

# An In-Depth Guide to the Wines of Burgundy

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- History of the Region
- Geology and the notion of Terroir
- Appellations and Classifications
- Climate and Vintages
- Tasting!



## History: Why Burgundy Is the Way It Is

- Roman Empire records date production back to 200 AD
- 500-1600s: Vineyards developed by Monks
- Ownership primarily Church and Royalty
- 1789: French Revolution
- All assets confiscated from Church & Royals and sold at auction
- Small vineyard parcels purchased by the merchant class
- Most vineyards now owned by 15-90 different owners!
- The Négociants
- 1930s: Start of domaine bottling by a handful of domaines
- 1980s: Estate bottling begins on a larger scale



## Mono-cépage wines (single varietal)

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

## Organization: Appellations

- Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée
  - Appellation d'Origine Protégée
    - Where you can plant
    - Variety
    - Yield
    - Ripeness/Alcohol levels
    - Vineyard management
    - Winemaking techniques
    - Labeling requirements

## Regions:

- Chablis
  - Côte d'Or
  - Côte Chalonnaise
  - Mâconnais
  - Beaujolais
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- Bourgogne (45%)
  - Villages (43%)
  - Premier (1er) Crus (10%)
  - Grand Crus (2%)

## Côte d'Or: The Golden Slope

- Côte d'Or is on a fault line, which has pushed up this “golden slope”
- Exposure is mostly southeast; the Grand and Premier Crus tend to lie mid-slope around 250-300 meters where the soil drains well
- Soil types are oolitic limestone (limestone made up of oolites, small rounded particles) and marl (mixture of clay with calcium carbonate)
  - Generally, Pinot Noir tends to grow better on marl; Chardonnay tends to grow better on limestone
- Continental climate, away from the influence of the sea, around the 47th parallel
- Winters are cold; possibilities of spring and fall frosts; temperate summers



## Côte d'Or: The Golden Slope

- Côte de Nuits communes...
  - North to South:
    - Marsannay
    - Fixin
    - Gevrey-Chambertin
    - Morey St.-Denis
    - Chambolle-Musigny
    - Vougeot
    - Vosne-Romanée
    - Nuits Saint-Georges
  - Almost all Pinot Noir
  - Vineyards within communes broken up into Grand, 1er, Villages
- Côte de Beaune communes...
  - North to South:
    - Pernand-Vergelesses/Ladoix-Serigny/Aloxe-Corton
    - Beaune
    - Pommard
    - Volnay
    - Meursault
    - Puligny-Montrachet
    - Chassagne-Montrachet
    - Santenay
    - Maranges
  - Pinot Noir and Chardonnay
  - Almost exclusively Chardonnay in Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Chassagne-Montrachet
  - Vineyards within communes broken up into Grand, 1er, Villages

## Côte de Beaune: Meursault

- No Grand Crus
- 19 Premier Crus
- Almost exclusively Chardonnay
- Soil: pebbles, limestone, clay
- Style tends to be richer, tropical notes, nutty, spicy
- Jean-Michel Gaunoux practices “lutte raisonnée” in the vineyard; does not fine or filter

*Jean-Michel Gaunoux Meursault '08*



## Côte de Beaune: Puligny-Montrachet

- 4 Grand Crus (2 shared with Chassagne)
- 17 Premier Crus
- Almost exclusively Chardonnay
- Soil is mostly brown limestone
- Style is linear, chiseled, taut, notes of citrus and stone
- Paul Chapelle also practices *lutte raisonnée*; uses minimal new oak
- Champgain vineyard is near top of slope

*Chapelle Puligny-Montrachet Villages Champgain '09*

## Côte de Beaune: Chassagne-Montrachet

- 3 Grand Crus (2 shared with Puligny)
- 55 Premier Crus
- Mostly Chardonnay, though it made more Pinot Noir through the 1980s
- Soil is clay and limestone
- Style is broad, firm but also rich, powerful
- Alex Gambal is an American; moved to Burgundy in 1993 and follows lunar cycles for racking and bottling wines
- This is sourced from *lieux dits* Blanchots and Les Essarts

*Alex Gambal Chassagne-Montrachet Villages '08*

## Côte de Nuits: Morey St.-Denis

- 5 Grand Crus
- 20 Premier Crus
- Almost exclusively Pinot Noir
- Soil is red-brown clay over limestone base
- Style is firm but not sharp, rich dark fruit with good concentration
- Domaine established by Georges Bryczek; now run by his young grandson Christophe who is greatly increasing quality

*Bryczek Morey St.-Denis Villages '09*



## Côte de Nuits: Vosne-Romanée

- Commune often “paired up” with adjacent Flagey-Echézeaux; 6 Grand Crus in V-R; 2 in F-E
- 14 Premier Crus
- Exclusively Pinot Noir
- Soil is limestone and clay
- Style is spicy, finessed, richly fruited yet elegant
- Gérard Mugneret based in Vosne; this is sourced from his vineyards throughout Côte de Nuits though made in his very “Vosne” style—pure, elegant, focused

*Gérard Mugneret Bourgogne Rouge '10*

## Côte de Beaune: Volnay

- No Grand Crus
- 29 Premier Crus
- Mostly Pinot Noir... though if Santenots Cru is planted to Chardonnay, it goes by Meursault
- Soil is mostly oolitic limestone
- Style is lean, lithe, softer tannins
- Prieur-Brunet is run by husband-and-wife team Dominique and Claude practicing lutte raisonnée

*Prieur-Brunet Volnay 1er Cru Santenots '09*

## 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...*



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!)

