

Burgundy Dinner Summary by Ian Blackburn

I write to improve my recollection of the wines and to build a catalog of scores and reviews for my website. www.WineCloudinc.com - if you enjoy my comments, join me there. I score the wine based on the quality of the bottle I am enjoying that day – your experience may vary and I love comments and responses.

LearnAboutWine Presents Great Burgundy with Guest Ursula Hermacinski at Melisse Restaurant. The 10-course meal was served – wines paired by Sommelier Brian Kalliel and Chef Josiah Citron

Domaine A. Et P. De Villaine, Bouzeron, 2009

Golden Aligote, not chardonnay; produced with insight, care and finesse. Bright fruit aromas of fresh orange peel & young Asian pear, soft floral/rose water, a tender touch of wood and perhaps lees to soften the typically hard edges. Minerality/stone linger. **88-90 points**

Domaine des Comtes Lafon, Meursault “Clos de la Barre” 2002

Last night this Meursault showed talcum powder/white stone minerality first and then the Domaine Lafon “firm” preference of expressive oak to frame the concentrated pear/apple/roasted nuts/ and tangy tart citrus (cumquat/marmalade) that is great Meursault. I’d love to revisit this wine in 10 more years to see if these big blocky flavors soften and evolve or fade with time. **91-92 points**

Domaine Faiveley, Corton-Charlemagne, Grand Cru 2009

Lemon curd, fresh pear, lemon peel, cream burlee/toasted cream in a blockbuster forward fruit presentation. Hard not to smile when smelling or tasting – very pure, focused, and intense... should be an amazing wine to enjoy and share with everyone. Knowone can refuse its inviting showy style. **95-96 points**

Domaine Michel Niellon, Batard-Montrachet, Grand Cru 2005

If the 09 Corton Charlemagne was a bodacious runway model ... this is the catalog model for the house of Chanel. Formal, dressed to the nines, refined, dignified, educated, and cut from the best cloth. This sultry subtle terroir driven style is precisely what you might expect from Michel Niellon and a tremendous vintage like 2005. Golden tree fruits discreetly presented behind the stone, chalk, limestone cloth so nicely tailored by Batards legendary dirt. Long pulses of muscular acidity are only revealed layer by layer as this rich refined Montrachet slowly melts to unveil this sweat inner core. **97-98 points**

Etienne Sauzet, Montrachet, Grand Cru 2008

I think this was a great surprise to many tonight. Top producer Sauzet focused this amazing juice with great craftsmanship and style. Previous experiences with 2008 great whites showed promise but did not give any true pleasure. Tonight, this Grand Cru gave us look at possibilities to come.... exposing layers and layers of quality Montrachet stone and mineral, and a palate packed with assorted tree fruit. An intense core and extremely deep and powerful spine of acidity – balanced and enriched by less stirring and seemly protected by a healthy vanilla/wood frame. Young indeed, 2008 will be like other vintages we wish we would have collected... as it has everything it needs to become increasingly fantastic. **96-98 points**

Domaine Comte Georges de Vogue, Bonnes-Mares, Grand 1990

Surprisingly intense, dark, deep, and showy - at 21 years – still a baby! Ripe and rich Bonnes-Mares is stacked with chewy candied cherry and dense earth expressions. A fantastic wine at this stage, a pleasure to swirl and smell – a shame to taste and make disappear. Gamey meats, cranberry, mer pouix, savory and sweet fruits, both dried cherry and black cherry skins. This is a treasure and a pleasure to share. **95-96 points**

Drouhin, Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru 2007

Soft fresh cherry, primary, fruit forward but with tannin and intensity to age. Pedigree quality of Bonnes Mares in a lighter earlier drinking style. **90-91 points.**

Louis Jadot, Musigny, Grand Cru 2004

Finesse inspired Burgundy warriors know that Musigny maybe one of the greatest vineyards period.... This wine will not change their minds at all and will win over any doubters. Refined, flawless lines and seemingly perfect balance – no discounts needed for the fact that the wine comes from a more difficult vintage... this is just brilliant wine. Brown spices, sautéed mushrooms, roasted meats, and a core of intense fruit. Satin like pinpoint tannins decorate every curve and gesture this wine makes, bringing great balance, and mouthfeel to the consumer. Very special and very rare – **98-99 points.** I don't know how it can get much better.

Domaine De La Romanee-Conti, Richebourg, Grand Cru 1998

Priced between \$1200-1800 a bottle, grandiose expectations come into play. Richebourg is an extraordinary terroir and obvious quality marks are found (color, intensity, depth, concentration) but perhaps a few more decades will be necessary to convince collectors that this is one you want to drink. I'm not sure why human behavior doesn't allow for us to celebrate what it might become... but even those that taste an abundance of great wine were very quick to kick this wine deep down into the cellar...perhaps not even appreciating what may emerge... and, in my mind, was not fair to this giant. 1998 has always been given a tough rap but remember that everyone loved 1997 on release and look at them now! (not looking very good!) I maybe alone... but I know that someday the great 98's will be amazing... but crazy patience will be necessary. This very closed, stem-y, youthful showpiece is not even close to being taste worthy... and if you do open, please allow for 8+ hours for decanting, heck, this wine might be better the next day or two! Some floral /violet was found but I might have been looking too hard as it barely emerged. Daunting minerality/stone and monumental tannins blocked most pleasurable responses... but I still was excited to add this experience to my filing cabinet... knowing that 20 years from now I will revisit and have some ideas of what is to come.... That is pleasurable. Too young to score accurately at this point... just score this one for the next generation.

Jayer-Gilles, Echezeaux du Dessus, Grand Cru 1993

Winner! Forgive me, but Brian Ferry's "Slave to Love" comes immediately to mind. This was a joy to smell and taste and when surrounded by wines 5x's its cost... low expectations were easy to satisfy, if not overwhelm. The optimal age character backed by truly gorgeous chewy cherry skins, brown butter sage & herbs, savory stewed meats, rich in flavor and really in an optimal state. **96-97 points**

Domaine De La Romanee-Conti, Echezeaux Grand Cru 2002

Thank God! 2002 is such a hedonistic vintage and Echezeaux wanted to play! Wow, right off the top of the glass was this huge monstrous nose of dark cherry syrup but packed with power, and concentration – I'm not sure what was more pleasurable... the concentration of great flavor or the sensation created by all the power that stirred your emotions and made you pay attention. There is no casual enjoyment here – you are prompted to pay attention and for a moment the room just got quiet and held on to the experience. Part of doing what I do is to know what clients might love... and to provide that for them. While I had hoped the 1998 might offer some intellectual conversation – it maybe playing too hard to get. But this 2002 is definitely a perfect dance partner... and when in doubt, do the 2002 dance... its just to good not to. Echezeaux is a Grand Cru, but it is more of a crowd pleasure than other Grand Crus – especially with the quality holdings of DRC. **96-97 points**

Camille Giroud, Chambertin 2005

There is so much to like about this wine. This house will soon reach its potential ... having tasted exciting wines with the winemaker in burgundy... I was very impressed with this effort that I believe he only assisted in finishing once the brand was purchased and the clean up had begun. The winemaker David Croix is truly a talented and style oriented artist.... So keep your eyes on future wines and start collecting any of the 2005 you can find. Its well priced and really delivers signature Chambertin masculine muscle but also the right amount of likeable charm; big fruit, big character and pleasurable style. Built to last but hard to resist now. Best from 2012 till the end of time. **95-96 points.**

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