

*Tasted in Bouzeron with Pierre de Benoist,
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Pierre on 2018:

"2018 – folkloric!" (You can see that Pierre is rather content with the vintage at this stage...) "The sole issue is that fermentations are quite long due to some of the alcoholic degrees..."

Pierre on 2017:

"We lost 60% in 2016 and a few parcels were touched by frost in 2017 too – but much more modestly – so essentially 2017 and 2018 mark two consecutive vintages here with some volume of production, though always some way below the yields that are allowed for the respective appellations."



Pierre also mentions that the oldest aligoté vines here are 115 years old – the youngest 15 – allowing the assembly of a masalle selection for the domaine of 'aligoté de Bouzeron' as it's a little different here – being the more golden fruited version than is often found up and down the Côte d'Or. *"Before phylloxera and the bulk production of vines in modern nurseries, each village, over generations, had particular styles of vines. The pinot of Vosne was not identical to that of Volnay, likewise a chardonnay of Meursault would have been different to that in Corton-Charlemagne – post-phylloxera, the pallate of clones shrunk and the emphasis was on the rootstocks..."*

Rully 1er Margotes is the new wine here, and in both colours too. Some buildings and a cellar also came with the purchase of an old domaine – actually two different domaines bought a couple of years apart – just as well as there would be too much volume for the existing space in Bouzeron, as this brings the total surface area of vines for the domaine to 37 hectares – 30 where they do all the work and approaching 20 cuvées – though some are quite small. Though

there's also an update to the cellar in Bouzeron that was completed in 2015 – after 40 years of negotiation with the neighbour who owned the land! The architect employed the golden number of 1.618 to calculate all the dimensions. “*We are Cartesian latins!*” smiles Pierre. Even the concrete on the floor mixed with the lees of that vintage's wine to ‘*connect it to the cellar.*’ Indeed, “*To inform the cellar, even the bricks of the walls were washed with fermenting wine to serve as a place for the yeast of the domaine.*”

The wines...

A large part of the Bouzeron, Rully St.Jacques and the Bourgogne Blanc (practically 80%) are in foudres, but Pierre is assessing multiple options, not least the possibility of using ‘jars’ – “*The reason we choose foudres is that from an oxidative perspective the wines are a little less stable when elevated only in barrel. Perhaps a filtration, if required, will be done, but it's a 'relatively rough' one to remove any large particles.*”

All cork seals here.

I love Pierre's use of the word ‘folkloric’ to describe the 2018 vintage – very helpful – as I can use the same word to describe a brilliant range of 2017s. If it's available, I'd simply take a mixed case to take the hard work out of choosing!

2017 Bouzeron

17 parcels of aligote in the domaine, can take the name Bouzeron.

A very nice width of aroma, faintly mineral. Round, melting but structured, saline, complex, slowly growing and widening in the finish – very persistent and agreeable, modest sucrosity. Fresh and moreish.

2017 Bourgogne Chardonnay Le Clous Aimé

Chardonnay from multiple parcels in Bouzeron with a little more depth of soil, mainly south, south-west facing. Not yet bottled, elevage in foudres and barrels.

A depth and weight of aroma, an interesting saline/phenolic aspect. Round, lithe, transparent, beautiful definition, beautiful on the palate. Young, lip-smacking bitters in the finish. On one hand a modest wine but on the other still rather an intellectual wine. Bravo...

2017 Rully Les Saint-Jacques

This and the bourgogne to be bottled in the next 2-3 weeks. An area that has had a problem with lack of potassium in the soil. So can have only 4 clusters per vine to bring sufficient maturity. So more a maturity by concentration than phenolic maturity.

Wide, attractively phenolic nose – really inviting. Weight, a subtle gas, mouth-watering, an extra richness but with a light touch and with a fine sucrosity. So only 500 bottles from well over a hectare. Great wine!

Les rouges...

2017 Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise Rouge La Fortune

Ready to bottle

Plenty of colour here. A dark cherry fruit, depth of graphite mineral – a nose of some power. Ooh, depth, concentration, freshness, and really very fine texture for the label. A pulp fruit

impression – it's absolutely delicious and vibrantly finishing – bravo wine!

2017 Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise La Digoine

Bio here since 1986, which allows us to achieve a maturity of fruit that we didn't have before. Same hillside as the last, older vines though. Also not yet bottled. The word 'Digoine' is an old one celebrating the quality of the water in a place.

More airy, floral, but with a super depth of concentrated dark fruit. Mouth-filling, a fine grain to the tannin, a density of flavour. Lingering flavour. Excellent.

2017 Mercurey Les Montots

A little iron in the soil here. North-east of the appellation, near Clos Myglands and La Framboisière. Plain south-facing, the soil a little red.

A super nose, an extra floral side to this wine. Fresh, more direct, a little clinging tannin, layers of fresh flavour. A tannin that adheres. Lingering waves of flavour – simply excellent once more.

2017 Rully 1er Champs Cloux

Now bottled, first vintage but organic since 2010 now changing to biodynamic.

More red-fruited despite a tiny reduction. Ooh, vibrant, juicy wine, balanced with a depth of structural tannin. Will you get bored if I say once more – Excellent!