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ITALY

THE TASTE OF LA DOLCE VITA: BRUNELLO, BAROLO, BARBERA, FRIULI, SOAVE & MORE

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOURGOGNE CÔTE D'OR APPELLATION

This relatively new classification gives producers and consumers a much-needed distinction to differentiate Bourgogne wines on the basis of site and production quality.

While Bourgogne is understandably world famous for its fine and rare wines from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, over half of all production is the relatively affordable and generic Régionale AOC. This category gives producers the advantage of blending across the region and forms an excellent entry-point to the market. But in 2017, a further distinction was launched for wines that are a step above these generic bottlings and fitting in below the village-level classifications.

While some producers are entitled to use the Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Beaune and de Nuits titles for wines made from the highest points in their respective regions, the new Côte d'Or denomination - which takes its name from a shortening of the word Orient because the slopes are east facing - applies to wines from vineyards beneath the mid-slope villages, but above the plains which provide grapes for red or white Bourgogne.

These wines can be made in specific areas from 40 villages within a 65km long and 1-2km wide strip of vineyards occupying the lower slopes of the Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits stretching from Dijon to the Maranges. Producers

must adhere to stricter rules on planting density, yields and minimal alcohol potential, some of which are set at the same level as village appellations such as a minimum 9,000 vines planted per hectare compared to 5,000 for Bourgogne.

Bottles from the first vintage, 2017 were released in early 2019 so it's only in the past couple of years that wines have been appearing on the shelves of major retailers and smaller independent merchants with more producers adopting the name with each vintage.

Speaking about the Bourgogne Côte d'Or appellation, Albéric Bichot, sixth generation family member running Maison Albert Bichot who farms more than 100ha across five prestigious Bourgogne estates believes it was 'a good decision for wine producers because it's what the consumer wants'.

'What we've seen for several years is customers wanting to know exactly

who is making the wine and where it comes from, even down to the single plot, and even at the regional level there is a real attraction in this information'.

Despite potentially making the region a 'little more complex once again' he says 'for the wine aficionados it's a great opportunity to get new information' and 'makes sense for the long term'.

Being able to use the denomination is an advantage for producers who have small plots close to borders of village appellations, says Bichot. 'It's not the same of course, but it's interesting - there are some common traits that are shared with these great neighbours'.

He also says using the term puts a 'helpful, gentle pressure on producers' who end up making these wines more like their village bottlings. 'There is a duty to do something better'.

So why should we be looking here now? Quality and value for money says Bichot. 'The Bourgogne Côte d'Or wines will be a little bit more expensive than a regular Bourgogne Pinot Noir or Chardonnay because of the site and specific yields but if someone doesn't want to pay the price of a village wine it makes it more affordable to discover another quality level of Bourgogne.'

"For the wine aficionados it's a great opportunity to get new information"



BOURGOGNE CÔTE D'OR BLANC

Patrick Javillier, Cuvée des Forgets

2018 94 Noble Green Wines

Renowned for his excellent quality Meursaults and other Côte de Beaune Premier and Grand Crus this more humble bottling shouldn't be overlooked. It has a really bright lemon nose, so fresh and alive with honeyed lime, orange blossom crisp green apple. Such a smooth and sensual texture, it has real weight and generosity of flavour, deep and complex with rounded citrus fruits and a touch of toast. Rich and satisfying with well judged acidity and a long length. An absolutely wonderful wine that's a brilliant showcase for whites in this Côte d'Or category. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 13%

Domaine Anne Bavard-Brook, Les Equinces 2019 93

From a small biodynamic winery, run by Anne and her partner John, this exceptional new white adds to their impressive small-batch line-up which counts a Puligny-Montrachet Vieilles Vignes among the stars. This is rich and full bodied with a ripe nose comprising buttery, creamy lemon notes alongside hints of gooseberry, honey and white flowers - it smells so welcoming. It has a gorgeous mouthfeel, just the right weight to make an impact while still being refreshing. Crunchy apple, Mirabelle plum and wet stone are underpinned by vibrant acidity giving this wine presence and impact in the mouth with some spiced elements and bitter lemon hints that add complexity and depth. A wine to seek out. **Drink** 2021-2027 **Alc** 14.3%

Domaine du Clos des Poulettes 2019 91

An under-the-radar family estate managed by sixth-generation winemaker Hélène Michaut who makes this wine from 2ha of Chardonnay vines. It has an aromatic and pleasing nose, drawing you in straight away. The palate is full of bright lemon and honeyed peach flavours with good acidity to keep things lively and refreshing. It's soft and round, with some tropical pineapple liveliness, well balanced acidity and a rounded mouthfeel. Some lime zest and accompanying salinity comes in on ample finish adding interest until the very end. **Drink** 2021-2026 **Alc** 13%

Domaine Roux Père et Fils 2019 91 Tannico

This excellent wine hails from a family-run estate with a heritage stretching back to 1855 located in Saint-Aubin in the southerly part of the Côte d'Or. This is intense and expressive

straight away with open and youthful aromas - citrus fruits, toast and wood spice. The palate is complex while light and fresh in style with zippy lemon flavour alongside baked apricot and grapefruit with a chalky and nuttiness undercurrent that leaves a good impression in the mouth. Mouthwatering, vibrant, and totally drinkable while also having the potential to age and develop. **Drink** 2021-2026 **Alc** 12.5%

BOURGOGNE CÔTE D'OR ROUGE

Albert Bichot, Secret de Famille 2018 93 Honest Grapes

Taking advantage of the new appellation in 2017, Albert Bichot carefully sources grapes from renowned terroirs in the Côte d'Or, around Pommard, Chambolle-Musigny, Nuits-Saint-Georges, Gevrey-Chambertin and Marsannay and treats this wine as 'Villages' with stricter yields and ageing in 100% French oak barrels for 10-12 months. It has a wonderfully deep and sensual nose full of charming red cherries, blackberries, violets, dark chocolate and plums. The texture is so smooth, like cashmere, with tannins that just settle lightly on the tongue. Full of juicy red fruit on the palate, strawberries and raspberries and lively in the mouth. Satisfying and fresh, with great depth of flavour and a long finish. Tasted two days apart with the fruit-forwardness settling and softening by the second day, though both days delicious. **Drink** 2021-2029 **Alc** 13%

Domaine des Terres de Velle 2018 93 Raeburn Fine Wines

From a domaine that started from scratch in 2009 run by Burgundians, but not winemakers, Sophie and Fabrice Laronze. This is made from two plots, one in Volnay and the other on the plain of Puligny-Montrachet. It has a deep nose, with black berries and bramble fruits on the nose. On the palate it has a slightly weightier texture than the others, still light and juicy but the tannins are just a bit firmer and this has a darker fruit profile. Very delicious and drinkable but one that will also go the distance in terms of ageing. Lovely lingerie black cherry flavour around the sides of the mouth, this also has a cooling, blue fruit intensity that delivers on the finish. **Drink** 2021-2030 **Alc** 13.5%

Louis Jadot 2018 93 Dulwich Vintners, Handford Wines, The Solent Cellar, Taurus Wines

The newest cuvée in the Jadot portfolio produced from vineyard plots bordering the villages of the Côte d'Or between Marsannay to the north and Maranges to the south. There is attractive cherry, strawberry and redcurrant depth on the nose. On the palate

the texture stands out with light-weight tannins that are so soft and smooth, they glide on the tongue effortlessly. This is shiny and bright with complex layers of ripe stems, herbs and fleshy fruit. Well structured with some cooler blue fruits and hints of pepper coming in on the finish. Interesting, moreish and drinking beautifully now. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 13.5%

Louis Latour 2018 93 Louis Latour Ltd

Remaining in the family since its foundation in 1797, this new red wine has a fresh and delicate nose of red berries, tomato leaf and wood spice - really welcoming but deep too. The palate is so zippy, really fresh with dense fruit flavour but a lightness of touch. It has high acidity keeping a sense of freshness with generous layers of dried herbs, cherries and redcurrants. There is also a satisfying mineral tone and gentle grippy tannins on the tongue through to the finish. Extremely easy to drink. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 13%

Edouard Delaunay 2018 92 Majestic

This historic estate was reborn in 2017 when winemaker and fifth generation Laurent Delaunay purchased back the name, winery and cellars next to the family home. Two thirds of the Pinot Noir grapes for this cuvée were selected from vineyards in the Côte de Beaune (Pommard, Pernand-Vergelesses and Chorey-les-Beaune), while one third was sourced from the Côte de Nuits (Fixin). This has welcoming fruity and savoury nose comprising ripe cherries, bramble fruits, oak spice and damp forest floor - it's deep and seductive in a wild way but also has a gentle perfumed backbone to the aromas that adds even more interest. The palate is fruit forward, upfront, zingy and refreshing. Clean and smooth with well-judged acidity. Concentrated red cherry and redcurrant with some strawberry juice on the long finish. **Drink** 2021-2028 **Alc** 13%

Domaine Jean Fournier 2019 92

Berry Bros

From one of the oldest family names in Marsannay, this estate is now under the helm of Laurent Fournier who has 16 hectares of organically-farmed vineyards on the prestigious soils of Marsannay, Gevrey-Chambertin and Fixin. This has delicious crunchy strawberry, red cherry and black plums on the nose - subtly perfumed and aromatic. There are soft tannins on the palate, a smooth mouthfeel with depth and elegance. Overall there is appealing freshness and vibrancy running through - utterly drinkable and one to open now. **Drink** 2021-2026 **Alc** 13%