



#228
30, December 2016

2015 RED BURGUNDIES



Reviewer : Neal MARTIN

94-96

2015 CHAMBOLLE MUSIGNY 1ER CRU LES AMOUREUSES

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94-96

2015 GRANDS-ECHÉZEUX Grand Cru

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Albert Bichot is a Burgundy stalwart that at least from where I stand, is unfairly disparaged by some cognoscenti. I always put them right because whilst occasionally I find some wines wanting, they currently produce some really quite excellent wines under head winemaker Alain Serveau, who joined me at their tasting at their headquarters on the Beaune ringroad, along with managing director, Albéric Bichot.



"We are in a hot vintage," explained Alain in reference to the 2015s, "so the cooler and more high-altitude sites made wines with more interest, because of the freshness and mineralité.

We made big and concentrated wines in warmer sites that maybe are less interesting. It is the same for the whites. We did some green harvest in some places because there was too many grapes for the appellation. So we try to leave 8 bunches maximum per vine. We began the harvest on the 4 or 5 September for the whites, the reds around 7 or 8 September. I wanted to introduce more de-stemmed grapes, because I remember 1976 and I was concerned about the hardness of the tannin. We used around 20% whole bunch for most of the red crus. We were watching the higher level of sugar during the alcoholic fermentation so you had to manage the extraction. We didn't leave it too long in vat, between 26 to 28 days including the pre-fermentation maceration and perhaps there was slightly less pigeage. I tasted the juice every day to know what to do. Sometimes the vintage is more strong than the winemaking and if you don't modify too much, that is the better way. The natural alcohol levels sometimes reached 14.0° to 14.5°, for example in Echézeaux and Grands Echézeaux. The management of the tannin in the Côte de Beaune was more difficult. We will decide on the bottling later on, so I might bottle some of the Côte de Nuits before the Côte de Beaune - it depends on the tannin." Perhaps mirroring the tasting I subsequently made at Maison Jacques Prieur, 2015 is clearly a vintage where quality lies with the red wines rather than whites. No surprise there. Whilst not as consistent as perhaps they could have been, that does not preclude Bichot from making really quite delicious, complex wines that often surprise people in blind tastings when not swayed by the label.

The **2015 Bourgogne "Secret de Famille"** comes from fruit sourced from around the Côtes de Nuits as usual. I have to say, I appreciate the joie-de-vivre on the simple nose that bounds along with black cherry and cranberry aromas. The palate is sweet and ripe on the entry, but there is also good acidity here and a dash of black pepper enlivening the finish. Enjoy this over the next couple of years. **86**

The **2015 Mercurey 1er Cru Champs-Martin**, which as usual comes under the "Domaine Adélie" label, includes around 20% stem addition this year. It has an attractive bouquet with well-defined cranberry and raspberry preserve aromas, a hint of potpourri emerging with time in the glass. The palate is well balanced with sappy red and black fruit. There is a pleasant edginess here, sure a little rustic compared to others thanks to its broad-shouldered finish. However, there is charm and crispness, therefore I suspect it will drink well, especially with more hearty cuisine, over the next 4-7 years. **87-89**

The **2015 Pommard Clos des Ursulines** offers perfumed red cherry, raspberry preserve and bergamot scents on the well-defined nose. The palate is well balanced with sappy red berry fruit, well-judged acidity, then a slightly chalky texture on the edgy finish that should develop the necessary counterbalancing flesh by the time of bottling. Good potential here. **89-91**



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The maiden **2015 Fixin 1er Cru Clos de la Perrière** has a fragrant, perfumed bouquet with open red cherry and crushed strawberry fruit, one of the most attractive among Bichot's 2015s. The palate is medium-bodied with fleshy red cherry and raspberry fruit, good depth and a crisp line of acidity. It feels sensual towards the smooth finish, completing what is a very competent debut. I look forward to tasting more in the future. **90-92**

The **2015 Nuits-Saint-Georges 1er Cru Château-Gris**, the monopole belonging to Albert Bichot, has a tightly-wound bouquet with black cherry, blackberry and raspberry preserve aromas, though it is well defined and pure. The palate is smooth on the entry with gently gripping tannin, slightly chewy red berry fruit with a little gruffness towards the structure finish. Hopefully it will be less surly once in bottle, because the prolonged spicy aftertaste is attractive. **88-90**

The **2015 Morey-Saint-Denis 1er Cru Les Sorbets** felt a little subdued on the nose despite coaxing. The palate is more expressive with supple tannin, plenty of red cherry and raspberry fruit infused with a pinch of white pepper and a keen line of acidity. With good persistence on the finish, this should eventually evolve into an attractive Morey Saint Denis once the aromatics awaken, so afford it 3-4 years in bottle. **90-92**

The **2015 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Lavaux-Saint-Jacques** has a fragrant bouquet with very fine Pinot Noir character, the coolness of the site really counterbalancing the precocity of the vintage and frankly, showing up the more alcoholic and powerful Vosne-Romanée Malconsorts. The palate is very well balanced with supple tannin, fleshy and harmonious in the mouth with a very elegant, quite suave finish. This comes highly recommended. **92-94**

The **2015 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru les Chabiots** has an attractive nose marked by scents of morello cherry, wet limestone and almost Alpine-fresh aromas. There is something airy about the aromatics here. The palate is medium-bodied with sappy red berry fruit, cohesive in the mouth with fine structure on the finish that maintains commendable precision. This will be well worth investigating once in bottle - one of Bichot's more sophisticated offerings in this vintage. **90-92**

The **2015 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru Amoureuses**, which contains 20-25% whole bunch fruit, has a surprisingly understated bouquet when considering both the precocity of the vintage and the esteemed vineyard in question. It gently unfurls with red cherries, strawberry preserve, crushed rose petals and wet stone. This is very classy and dare I say, I might mistake it for say one of Christophe Roumier's wines. The palate is very refined with crisp acidity, shimmering red cherry and strawberry fruit, superb mineralité and great tension on the finish. Do not underestimate this Amoureuses, because I suspect it will have a long and prosperous future. **94-96**

The **2015 Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru** has a clean and pure bouquet with raspberry preserve, cranberry cordial and light slate aromas developing in the glass, although they took five to eight minutes to really get going (unlike the more immediate Chambertin for example). The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe red cherry and raspberry fruit, crisp acidity, quite saline in the mouth with plenty of sappiness on the finish. I would have just liked a little more sustain on the aftertaste, but otherwise this is fine. **90-92**

The **2015 Clos de la Roche Grand Cru** has a focused, quite reserved bouquet that seems to temper the precocity of the growing season and allow the stony terroir to filter through the fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with supple and extremely fine tannin, just the right amount of salinity with an edgy and vibrant, feminine finish. This is a graceful Clos de la Roche from Bichot that should age with style. **92-94**

The **2015 Chambertin Grand Cru** has a very expressive bouquet that comes racing out of the traps: ebullient morello cherries, crushed strawberry, rose petals and damson scents that are quite intoxicating even at this prenatal stage. The palate is medium-bodied with fine, tensile tannin, layers of crisp red cherry and raspberry fruit sprinkled with white pepper and clove. This builds nicely in the mouth and it fans out gloriously. This is superb. **93-95**

The **2015 Echézeaux Grand Cru** has a very perfumed, wilted violet-scented bouquet that almost has a Margaux-like personality. I appreciate the delineation and focus here. The palate is smooth and silky on the entry with a keen line of acidity, bright and quite vivid in style with animated red cherry, crushed strawberry and spice box notes on the finish that gently fans out. This is a well-crafted Echézeaux from Albert Bichot. **91-93**

The **2015 Grands-Echézeaux Grand Cru** has a little more horsepower on the nose vis-a-vis the Echézeaux, with copious red cherries, kirsch, blueberry and hints of violets coming through with aeration. The palate is smooth and sensual on the entry, quite plush in style but with very well-judged acidity. With impressive tension from start to finish, this is a Grands Echézeaux with the class of some of the more illustrious practitioners of this vineyard and it should easily age over the next 20-25 years without problem. **94-96**