

# BURGUNDY 2020

## AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR

Reports coming in last summer of the long drought that hit Burgundy had many writing off the vintage before it had even been picked. What then turned out to be the earliest harvest on record did nothing to calm those concerns. Many of the vigneron themselves were concerned about how the wines from [this unique growing season](#) would turn out.

Now in bottle and preceding one of the most challenging seasons in the region's history (2021 being beset with frost, rain, disease... you name it, it happened), everyone is looking back at 2020 and wondering what they were worried about.

The white wines we tasted were exceptional – with fantastic balance, great acidity and wonderful concentration, but moderate alcohol levels, when compared to the more exuberant 2019 and 2018s. So many vigneron were keen to point out the low pH levels and very high concentration of tartaric acid – reminiscent of the 2014s, but these wines have so much more flesh too, making them easy to enjoy already. They are less skinny and austere than the 2014s, yet have the energy and equilibrium to age beautifully. What is not to like?

The variation in picking times for Pinot Noir emphasised how different parcels matured differently – whether due to microclimate, location, rootstock or access to water. It accentuated just how varied

Burgundy's landscape is, as well as vigneron's own tastes. Charles van Canneyt ([Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat](#)) remarked that people were picking Pinot in the same vineyard up to a month apart. With moderate alcohol levels from all but a few producers, it certainly wasn't racing sugar levels that forced an early harvest, but that the season started early and stayed so right through to harvest. It was down to the vigneron to dictate the style of their wines.

All in all, there's more of a range in styles among the reds. In general, the fruit sits more in the red than black spectrum, bright and crunchy, with vibrant acidity and alcohol levels that tend to be closer to 13-13.5% (around 1% less than 2019 in many places). As Charles van Canneyt noted, it's more classic than 2018 or '19, while Nicole Lamarche praised the finesse and elegance of the year – something that certainly comes through in her wines.

It is abundantly clear that 2020 produced some magnificent wines, with exceptional balance, freshness and full fruit maturity, yet that also remain very Burgundian in style. How it happened is a lot less clear, but we heard plenty of theories, that – while not completely consistent – go at least some way to explaining the vintage. While the vigneron are uncertain why the wines turned out the way they did, how they got there is by the by: these are extraordinary wines.

### THE VINTAGE IN SUMMARY

- + A vintage of outstanding quality
- + Whites very slightly edge the reds, with more consistency
- + Despite being a warm year, wines show vibrant acidity and good terroir expression
- + Yields reduced by up to 40%, with Pinot Noir more impacted than Chardonnay
- + Prices will be up (around 10-30%) due to the year's low yields, and the almost catastrophic levels seen in 2021

» [Read more about the vintage](#)



## BY PRODUCER

Here you'll find a brief summary of how each producer fared in the vintage, as well as our favourite wines from the tasting table

### **Domaine Charles Audoin (Marsannay)**

For Cyril Audoin, the 2020 vintage was “good – very good” but left him with lower yields than he'd like, at 25hl/ha (versus a normal 40-45hl/ha). For him, the key qualities of the 2020 vintage are its freshness and energy – something that shines through in a range of stunningly vibrant wines, with wonderful pristine fruit and perfume.

★ *2020 Marsannay, Les Favières, Domaine Charles Audoin*

### **Domaine Fourrier + Jean-Marie Fourrier (Gevrey-Chambertin)**

Jean-Marie Fourrier loves the straight acidity and density of 2020, which he thinks is “remarkable”. He suffered badly when it came to yields, with 50-60% less than normal across the domaine – entirely due to the dry conditions from June until harvest. The wines are ripe, rich and structured expressions of the vintage, yet still with a great backbone of acidity.

★ *2020 Mazoyères-Chambertin, Vieilles Vignes, Grand Cru, Jean-Marie Fourrier*

### **Domaine Tortochot (Gevrey-Chambertin)**

Domaine Tortochot produces very pretty, elegant, perfumed Pinot Noir and remains a good-value option in Gevrey-Chambertin. There's great consistency throughout the range this year, with lower alcohol levels compared to 2019. The 2020s have lovely clarity of fruit – a step up from the 2019s. It's the best range of wines we have tasted from them.

★ *2020 Mazis-Chambertin, Grand Cru, Domaine Tortochot*

### **Domaine Duroché (Gevrey-Chambertin)**

For Duroché, 2020 was “quite an easy vintage”. Yields were low, but they always are here due to the high percentage of old vines. The berries were so small and concentrated that the wines have greater density on the palate than any other vintage Pierre Duroché has seen, but fortunately also good acidity levels. The wines show exceptional balance and purity.

★ *2020 Gevrey-Chambertin, Premier Cru, Lavaut Saint-Jacques, Vieilles Vignes, Domaine Duroché*

### **Domaine Gérard Raphet (Morey-Saint-Denis)**

Raphet is an understated estate, blessed with a few exceptional parcels – most notably their old-vine Clos Vougeot and Clos de Bèze Grands Crus, that are fantastic value. Yields were 30-40% down in 2020 due to the summer drought. The alcohol levels are lower, and the 2020s are a definite step up from the 2018s, with some really excellent wines.

★ *2020 Clos de Vougeot, Vieilles Vignes, Grand Cru, Domaine Gérard Raphet*

### **Domaine Georges Lignier (Morey-Saint-Denis)**

Benoît Stehly is one of the region's most erudite and thoughtful vigneron. With his large holdings of Grand Cru Clos Saint-Denis he makes one of the best-value Grands Crus in the Côte. The wines always have an emphasis on freshness, but the natural concentration of the vintage really suits them, adding more flesh, while remaining very acid-driven.

★ *2020 Clos-Saint-Denis, Grand Cru, Domaine Georges Lignier*



### **Domaine des Lambrays (Morey-Saint-Denis)**

Due to a combination of conversion to biodynamics in 2020 and some coulure during flowering, production here was down to just 15hl/ha. The quality, however, is exceptional. The 2020 is denser and richer than 2019, but still very Burgundian with a delicate, elegant character that has not been lost to the power of the vintage.

★ *2020 Clos des Lambrays, Grand Cru, Domaine des Lambrays*

### **Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat (Vosne-Romanée)**

It feels very much like 2020 is a vintage that aligns well with Charles van Canneyt's elegant touch. The wines are fresh and concentrated, yet with the enchanting transparency that only the finest Pinot Noir is capable of. Yields, unfortunately, are the issue – with a reduction of up to 40% across the range.

★ *2020 Chambolle-Musigny, Premier Cru, Les Charmes, Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat*

### **Domaine Georges Noëllat (Vosne-Romanée)**

According to winemaker Maxime Cheurlin, his 2020s are the greatest wines he has ever made. Slightly critical of 2019's high levels of maturity and alcohol, he believes his 2020s are fresher, more vibrant, seductive and finessed. Picking after the late August rains was key to his success. The results are outstanding.

★ *2020 Vosne-Romanée, Premier Cru, Les Beaux Monts, Domaine Georges Noëllat*

### **Domaine Lamarche (Vosne-Romanée)**

Despite the warmth of 2020, Nicole Lamarche loves the finesse and elegance of the vintage, with alcohols here averaging a modest 13.5%. The yields are 25% lower than normal, but it doesn't bother her – nor should it when the wines she did make are so beautiful. It's hard to pick a favourite in a line-up with such effortless finesse.

★ *2020 La Grande Rue, Grand Cru, Domaine Lamarche*

### **Gros Frère & Sœur (Vosne-Romanée)**

There's been a notable shift at this Vosne cellar recently. While once the address was known for generous new oak, this has been reigned in – so much so that in 2020 there were just 10 new barrels in the cellar. The resulting wines are taut, crunchy, red-berried expressions of the vintage with barely-there oak.

★ *2020 Vosne-Romanée, Gros Frère & Sœur*

### **Domaine Faiveley (Nuits-Saint-Georges)**

“An extraordinary vintage in both white and red,” says Erwan Faiveley of 2020 – but it was a surprise, particularly with the reds. Mercurey was the worst affected by the drought and yields were halved. But there was great consistency throughout the range, with each wine showcasing its terroir and the quality of the vintage.

★ *2020 Gevrey-Chambertin, Premier Cru, Clos des Issarts, Domaine Faiveley*

### **Domaine David Duband (Chévannes)**

For David Duband, the vintage was characterised by surprising freshness, with a mineral and linear character that he was not expecting. The year defied the notion of a “hot” vintage, producing wines of amazing fruit clarity, vibrancy and freshness, with so much personality and terroir distinction.

★ *2020 Morey-Saint-Denis, Domaine David Duband*

### **Domaine Jean-Marc & Hugues Pavelot (Savigny-lès-Beaune)**

One of the leading producers in Savigny-lès-Beaune, Hugues Pavelot was very happy with the natural richness of his grapes in 2020. The range shows great consistency, with each wine speaking clearly of its site. The wines have excellent freshness and lovely energy.

★ *2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune, Premier Cru, Aux Guettes, Domaine Jean-Marc & Hugues Pavelot*

### **Domaine Remoissenet Père & Fils (Beaune)**

The 2020 vintage was another classic hot vintage according to the team here, but cooler than 2019. While the growing season was similar to 2003, the wines taste completely different. “The plant and ourselves have evolved,” says General Manager Cécile Bégin. The village wines offer exceptional value in 2020. The reds and whites are powerful, with some excellent individual examples across the Premiers Crus.

★ *2020 Meursault, Premier Cru, Charmes, Remoissenet Père & Fils*

### **Bouchard Père & Fils (Beaune)**

Winemaker Frédéric Weber was happy to report no disease and perfect maturity for both the whites and reds. Thick skins meant a lot of tannin and deep colour in the Pinot Noir. The high levels of tartaric acid in the grapes have brought great freshness and there are distinct differences between each terroir, with fantastic consistency across the board here.

★ *2020 Meursault, Premier Cru, Genevrières, Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils*

### **Louis Jadot (Beaune)**

Frédéric Barnier likes 2020 – it's a classic vintage with no over-ripeness and great tension. The challenge – especially for Jadot, working across so many different sites – was to pick at the right time and capture each terroir. The reds offer elegant, silky tannins with deep colour and refined acidity, while the whites really shine. Serious wines all round.

★ *2020 Savigny-lès-Beaune, Premier Cru, Les Narbantons, Louis Jadot*

### Albert Bichot (Beaune)

Winemaker Alain Serveau noted how little juice there was in 2020, but otherwise there was little to report: it was a beautiful vintage with a healthy crop. Bichot might be one of the region's larger operations, but it shouldn't be shy – the quality of the 2020s is excellent, with clear delineation between each terroir, and the wines offer amazing value.

★ 2020 *Griottes-Chambertin, Grand Cru, Albert Bichot*

### Domaine de Bellene + Maison Roche de Bellene (Beaune)

Nicolas Potel is puzzled by 2020. He can't explain it, but is pleased with the result – a vintage which he prefers to 2019. The reds have structure and concentration that deserves time, while we particularly loved the whites on show here – displaying an amazing combination of fruit ripeness, vibrancy and beautifully judged oak.

★ 2020 *Corton-Charlemagne, Grand Cru, Maison Roche de Bellene*

### Henri Boillot (Meursault)

“C'est le top,” said Guillaume Boillot of 2020. He's delighted with the vintage – as he should be given the quality on show here. Boillot compares the vintage to 2014 when it comes to the whites, confident that even though the wines are pretty now they'll keep well. Given the balance and concentration, we've got no doubts about this.

★ 2020 *Meursault, Premier Cru, Clos Richemont, Domaine Henri Boillot*

### Domaine Paul Pernot (Puligny-Montrachet)

This domaine had excellent volumes in 2020 – bringing in a full and healthy crop that made for a very straightforward vinification. The wines are easily the best we have tasted from the domaine. The natural high acid and full fruit maturity work perfectly with Pernot's richer style and the natural linearity of Puligny-Montrachet.

★ 2020 *Puligny-Montrachet, Premier Cru, Les Pucelles, Domaine Paul Pernot*

### Alvina Pernot (Puligny-Montrachet)

Philippe Abadie and Alvina Pernot think that 2020 is the best vintage they've made so far – and we can't help but agree. The line-up of pinpoint, taut and mineral Chardonnay is the best we've seen from this fledgling operation, and aligned with 2020's natural character. To top it off, yields here were good enough to fill the cellar.

★ 2020 *Meursault, Premier Cru, Les Charmes, Alvina Pernot*

### Domaine Hubert Lamy (Saint-Aubin)

For Olivier Lamy, the 2020 vintage was as early as 2003 but not as dry or hot. All in all, the wines were a “good surprise” – with more freshness than anticipated. The wines here were mid racking and therefore in a slightly awkward place when we visited, however the quality is as good as ever chez Lamy – with precision, concentration and balance.

★ 2020 *Bourgogne Chardonnay, Les Chataigners, Domaine Hubert Lamy*

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# OUR FAVOURITES

The top 10 wines from our tastings so far

## **2020 Puligny-Montrachet, Premier Cru, Clos de la Mouchère, Domaine Henri Boillot**

Boillot's four-hectare monopole Clos de la Mouchère is always a favourite, and it's no different in 2020. This sub-section of Perrières produces a particularly honeyed expression of the site. There's a lovely line to it, with delicate sweet spice and honeysuckle florals – but what really stands out is the unbelievable concentration of fruit at its core.

## **2020 Chevalier-Montrachet, Grand Cru, Bouchard Père & Fils**

The Grand Cru whites from Bouchard are all brilliant. It is hard to choose a favourite but the Chevalier's complexity, balance and minerality is impossible to resist. The nose is deep and mineral, with restrained citrus oil aromas, while the palate has a wonderfully taut structure with dried apricot, mandarin and yellow apple fruit notes.

## **2020 Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet, Grand Cru, Maison Roche de Bellene**

Criots is the rarest of the Montrachets, at just 1.57 hectares. The soil here is stonier, producing an elegant and refined style of Chardonnay. In 2020, the wine is enticing with aromas of delicate lemon and almost orange citrus, fine sweet spice, toast and richer tones of white nectarine and flat peach.

## **2020 Chambolle-Musigny, Premier Cru, Les Charmes, Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat**

Charles van Canneyt has 0.21 hectares of this desirable Premier Cru. It is singing in 2020 – gorgeously expressive, with all the prettiness of great Chambolle, combined with the luxuriousness of this site. The nose is littered with delicate florals, dainty berry fruit and a hint of white pepper. Elusive and ethereal, this is beautiful red Burgundy.

## **2020 Nuits-Saint-Georges, Premier Cru, Les Pruliers, Domaine David Duband**

This was one of many stand-out wines in Duband's impressive set of 2020s. All the Nuits-Saint-Georges Premiers Crus in particular were full of energy and character, but Les Pruliers tipped it with its endorphin-rushing finish. The wine is both juicy in its fruit concentration and vinous-like with its herbal-edged tones. Wow!

## **2020 Vosne-Romanée, Premier Cru, Les Malconsorts, Domaine du Clos Frantin, Albert Bichot**

Albert Bichot is the largest owner of Malconsorts, with 1.76 of the 2.5-hectare Premier Cru neighbouring La Tâche. In 2020, it is exceptional. There is a great density and tension on the mid-palate, with more spice and cedar notes, the clean acidity driving a fresh, long, crunchy finish, revealing more plum. An absolutely brilliant wine.

### **2020 Vosne-Romanée, Premier Cru, Les Petits Monts, Domaine Georges Noëllat**

Georges Noëllat's Les Petits Monts is absolutely stunning and one of many highlights from the domaine in 2020. It manages the rare feat of being incredibly dense and concentrated on the palate, while remaining ethereally light at the same time. Moreish in the best possible sense, with a very long, mouth-watering finish, this is outstanding.

### **2020 Clos des Lambrays, Grand Cru, Domaine des Lambrays**

Each distinct characteristic of the various plots comes through effortlessly in the final blend of Clos des Lambrays. The delicate push and pull of the tannins, integrated with vibrant acidity, is wonderful. The wine is full of finesse but has no shortage of depth, with an amazing mid-palate roundness. This is hard to fault.

### **2020 Clos de la Roche, Grand Cru, Domaine Georges Lignier**

The aromatic complexity of this wine is captivating, with lifted, dried floral aromatics, cranberry and crunchy redcurrant notes, and a smoky minerality. On the palate, the fruit is rich, ripe and fleshy, a lovely contrast to the mineral, herbal, scented nose. There's great focus and energy on the long finish.

### **2020 La Grande Rue, Grand Cru, Domaine Lamarche**

Lamarche's iconic monopole is a narrow 1.65-hectare plot across the road from the Romanées. It's a wine one could smell forever, so pretty that it stops you in your tracks. Remarkable minerality is woven between dainty red-berry fruit and fine florals, with remarkably finessed, barely-there tannins. There is, as Nicole Lamarche says, "un côté mystique" to the wine.



#### FIND OUT MORE

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