



Burgundy Club

SPRING 2022



Welcome to the latest edition of the **Caveau Burgundy Club** – a twice-yearly tutored tasting and exploration of the great wines and terroirs of Burgundy.

This club functions just like our **Champagne Club** - (and if you're not already a member, email us - scott@caveauselections.com). Also, check out our new **"House Wine" Clubs** if you're interested in a steady supply of delicious Burgs at \$20-25 per bottle.

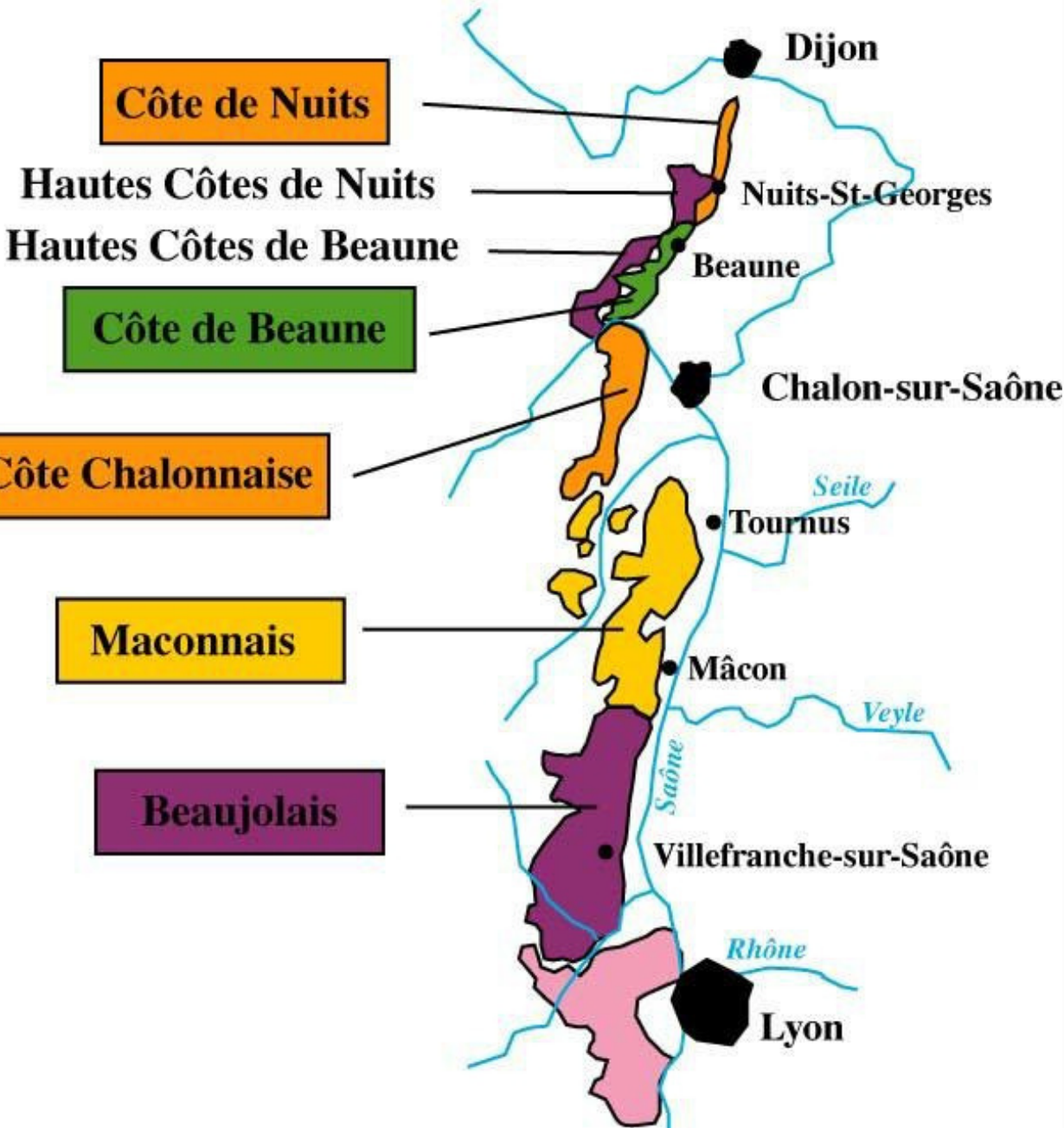
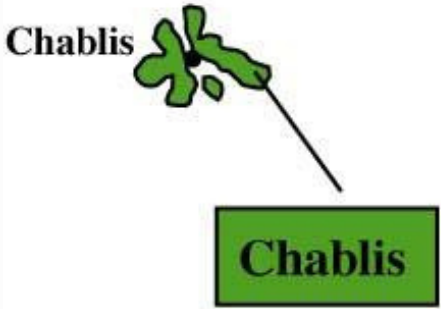
The wines in each 6-bottle Burgundy Club shipment have been specifically selected to help educate and illustrate – each shipment is essentially a Burgundy seminar-in-a-box. You can use all of this to stage your own tasting seminar at home, or of course you can just drink the wines one by one. Whichever path you choose – there's lots of good Burgundy in your future!

A tour of the Côte de Beaune

In this package we'll be taking you on a vinous tour of the **Côte de Beaune**, the southern half of the famed Côte d'Or, and home to revered wines in both red and white. From the hill of **Corton** in the north to **Maranges** at the extreme southern edge, we'll explore six wines from six very different terroirs, and get a nice overview of what this half of Burgundy is all about.



BURGUNDY



Burgundy Basics

The Burgundy region of France has been producing what are widely considered to be the world's finest Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays for nearly a thousand years. Burgundy is a relatively small area (only about 13,500 acres of vines in Burgundy's Côte d'Or, as opposed to Bordeaux's 235,000 acres or California's 515,000.) Oregon has recently grown larger than Burgundy, with some 18,000 vineyard acres now planted.

As in Oregon, most of the winegrowers and producers in Burgundy are small, family operations. The average estate size is about 15 acres, enough to produce about 3,500 cases of wine each year. Those 15 acres are often split into 10 or more tiny parcels of vineyards scattered around several different vineyards and villages — so production of each wine is often only a few hundred cases or less. While it can seem quite complicated, even perplexing at times, in reality Burgundy is fairly simple to decipher.

Red = Pinot Noir. If it's a red wine from Burgundy, it is made from the Pinot Noir grape. (Beaujolais, while technically part of the Burgundy region, is truly a different world altogether. Beaujolais reds are made from the Gamay Noir grape.)

White = Chardonnay. If it's a white wine from Burgundy, it's a Chardonnay. (Again, there are minor exceptions you'll rarely see — there's a white grape known as Aligoté that produces some very inexpensive, lower-level wines — but it will not come into play in anything we're discussing here.)

Unlike America, France has legal classifications for their wines. In Burgundy, the actual vineyards themselves, rather than the producer or wines, are given a level of classification. There are four levels:

Grand Cru — The best of the best. There are 32 Grand Cru vineyards in Burgundy, accounting for less than 2% of all Burgundy wine production. Grand Cru wines mention on the label only the producer and name of the vineyard — as in "Montrachet" or "Musigny" — the name of the village is not deemed necessary in the case of these great vineyards.

Premier Cru — (Also written as 1er Cru) One notch below the Grand Crus — there are hundreds at this level, and the quality varies widely. The best Premiers rival the Grand Crus, the lesser ones seem barely deserving of the ranking. These makeup about 10% of total production. A Premier Cru wine will mention the name of the village and possibly an individual vineyard on the label, as in "Pommard-Rugiens" or "Vosne-Romanée - Les Suchots" – if it indeed comes from a single vineyard. It will always bear the mark "Premier Cru" or "1er Cru". If the wine is a blend of more than one 1er Cru vineyard within a given village, it will simply bear the designation "1er Cru" without any vineyard designation.

Village — Grapes for a village wine come from one or many vineyards surrounding a specific Burgundian village, for example Vosne-Romanée or Puligny-Montrachet. These are classified below the 1er Cru level, but can often be lovely wines and great values. Village wines are about 43% of the total pie. The label will simply state the name of the village (although in some cases the name of a specific vineyard will also be mentioned, even though it is not of Premier Cru status.)

Regional (Bourgogne) — A bit less than half of all Burgundy vineyards (45%) are classified at the regional level. In the hands of dedicated and talented producers these can be lovely wines. In the hands of others they can be thin, weedy, and rather unpleasant. These wines are labeled as Bourgogne Rouge or Bourgogne Blanc, or Bourgogne Pinot Noir or Bourgogne Chardonnay.

Most of the vineyards in Burgundy are owned by multiple owners — as many as 70 or 80 different owners in some cases. (In the rare cases that a single producer owns the entirety of a specific vineyard, this is designated as a “Monopole.”) This means that each winery may own only a few rows of the vineyard, and will make only a few barrels of that specific wine each year (but they are likely to own small pieces of several other vineyards as well.) So, not all wines from the same vineyard are created equal. The quality can vary widely from producer to producer. In Burgundy, the most important consideration is in fact the producer. **Get to know the styles of different producers, and zero in on the ones you like best.** They will likely give you the most enjoyment year in and year out regardless of the classification level.



The Côte de Beaune

The walled, medieval city of **Beaune** - the wine capitol of Burgundy - gives its name to the southern half of the Côte d'Or. From the villages that make up the **Hill of Corton** in the north to the villages that make up the **Maranges** appellation in the south, it's a sprawling viticultural area encompassing 16 villages and thousands of acres of vineyard on a long, limestone escarpment that is hundreds of millions of years old.

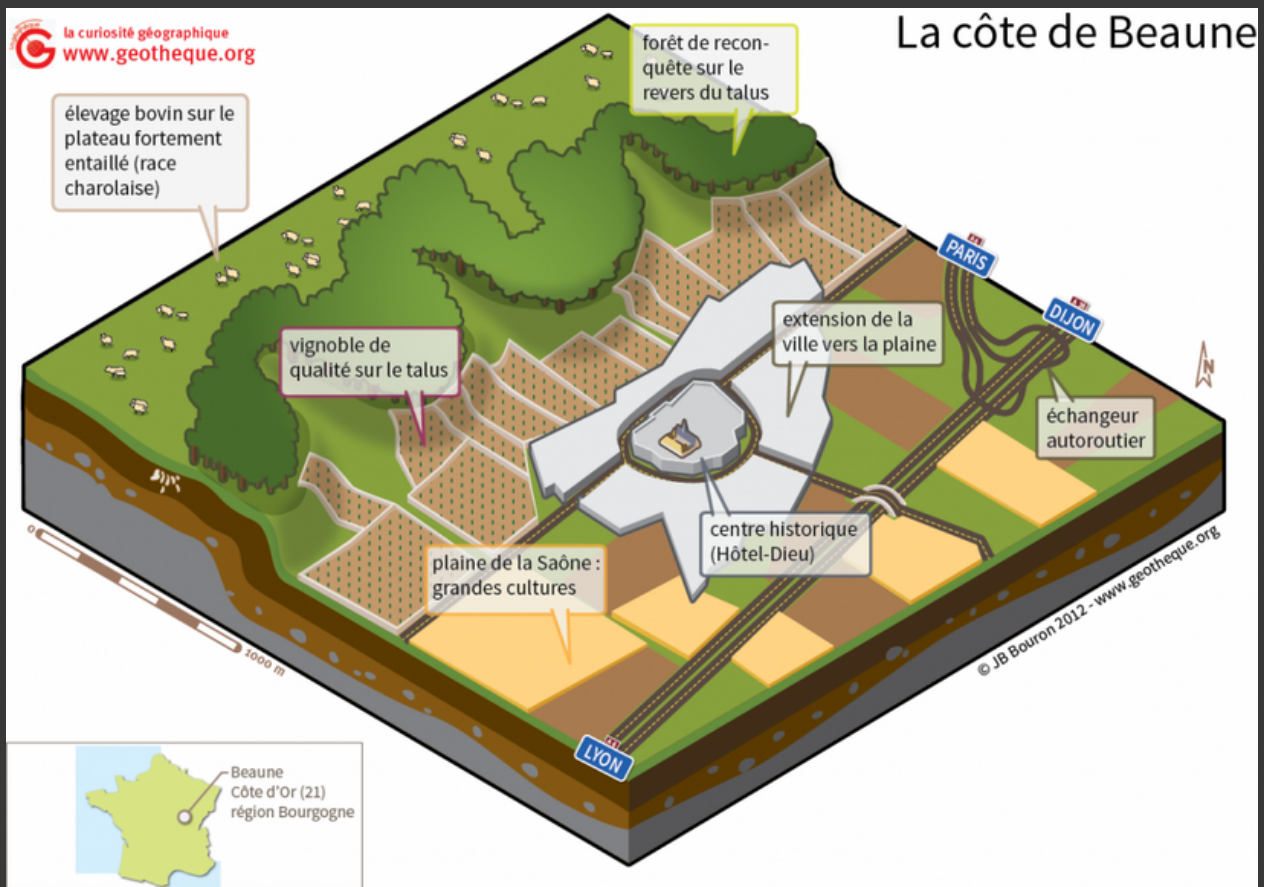
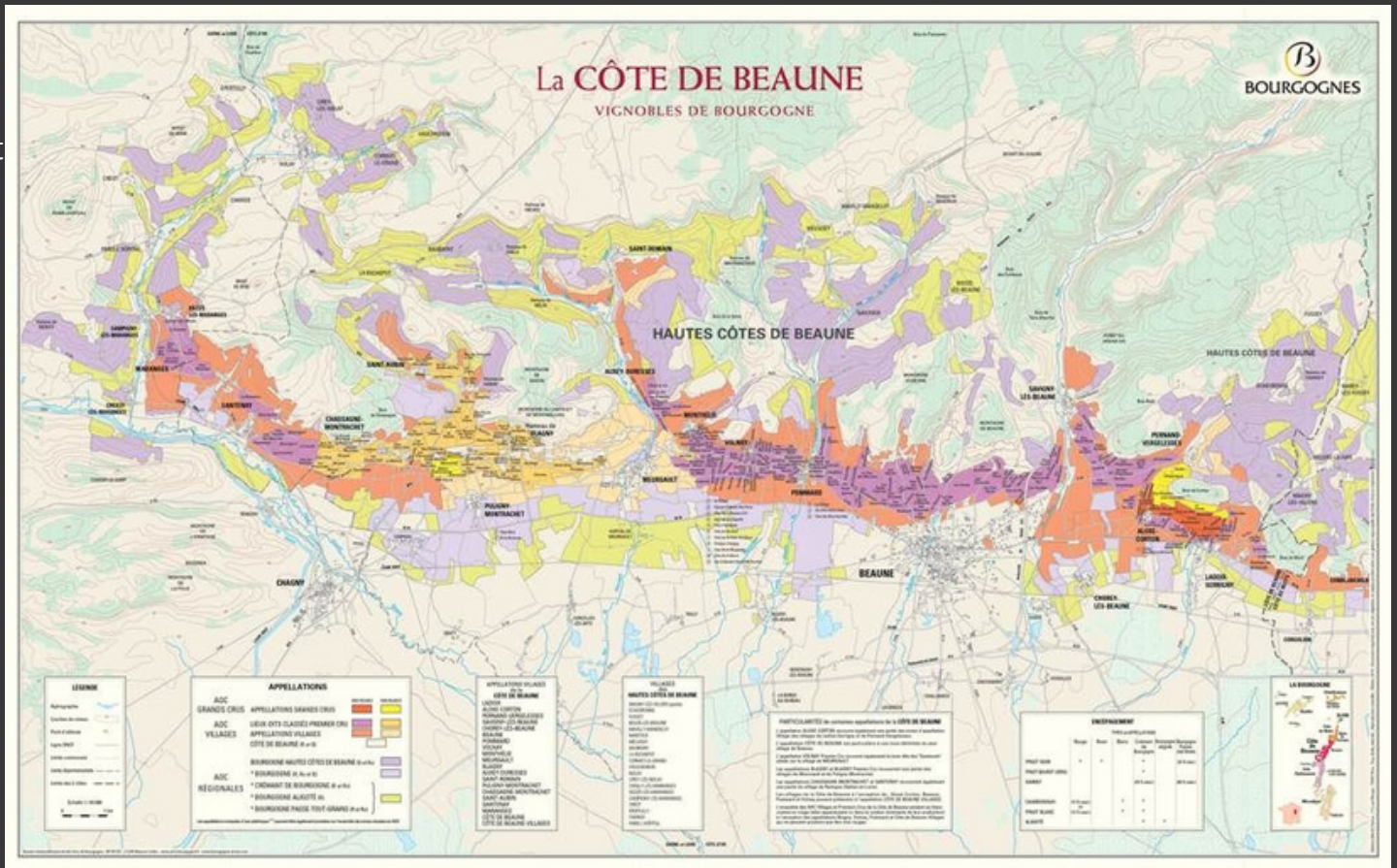
Unlike the Côte de Nuits, which is almost exclusively Pinot Noir territory, the Côte de Beaune produces superb wines in both red and white. It surprises people to find that the overall production of Burgundy is in fact about two-thirds white. The famous, lusted-after Grand Cru reds of the Côte de Nuits represent barely 1% of total production.

Côte de Beaune terroir is mostly Jurassic-era limestone based soils, but the vast complexities from site to site and village to village make it difficult and nearly worthless to try to generalize. It's long been held that the red wines from the Côte de Beaune can be wines of elegance, or wines of great power, but they rarely successfully combine the two. It's in the Côte de Nuits where finesse and majesty are truly combined in the great reds.

The Côte de Beaune whites are undeniably the quintessential examples of great Chardonnay, and truly have no peer.

The Côte de Beaune is home to only one Grand Cru in Red - **Corton**, which can run the gamut from superb to disappointing. On the white side there are six Grand Crus - **Corton**, **Montrachet**, **Chevalier Montrachet**, **Batard Montrachet**, **Bienvenue Batard Montrachet** and **Criots Batard Montrachet**. These can run from hundreds to thousands of dollars per bottle, and offer some of the most exquisite white wine experiences available on the planet. Interestingly, with the exception of Montrachet itself, most of these sites were planted mostly to Pinot Noir historically. It's only in the last 150-175 years that they've become known as the world's pinnacle of Chardonnay.

So, over the course of six very different wines, we'll explore a nice cross-section of what the Côte de Beaune has to offer. Enjoy the tour!



This is a good tool to help you visualize the Côte - it illustrates that the vineyards are mostly on the slopes below the forest, and generally face east or south-east. There are vineyards on the flat land of the plain as well, and these are generally classified at the "Bourgogne" level.

1. **Violot-Guillemard** 2020 Bourgogne "Les Maisons Dieu" - \$35



Joannès and Thierry Violot-Guillemard

We'll start our tour just outside the village of Pommard (a detailed discussion of which follows later in this document.) Nearly half of the vineyards in Burgundy are classified at the "Bourgogne" level, the appellation that allows for grapes that come from anywhere in the delimited vineyard region.

In this case, we have a rare single-vineyard Bourgogne, entirely from one parcel of vines. "*Les Maisons Dieu*" sits just across the borderline of the **Pommard** appellation, and wine from this plot was sold as Pommard prior to the AOC laws of 1935.

Thierry Violot-Guillemard and his son Joannès represent the 4th and 5th generation of the family, with significant holdings in Pommard and Volnay, as well as Beaune, Meursault, Monthélie and Auxey-Duresses. They were early adopters of organic farming, and have always made their wines with a gentle touch, their focus always being on wines of elegance and finesse.

Climat change has, in the short term, provided big benefits to Burgundy, most notably in the Bourgogne-level vineyards, which had often struggled to fully ripen in the past. These days they're in a sweet-spot year after year. This one of the finest examples of a "humble" Bourgogne as you're ever likely to come across, brimming with ripe and rich black fruits and fresh raspberries, and a refined texture on the palate that is more often found in wines of a much higher pedigree.

2. **Domaine Chevrot** 2020 Maranges "Sur le Chêne" - \$35



Pablo and Vincent Chevrot

Next we'll head down to the extreme southern end of the Côte de Beaune, where we'll find the appellation called **Maranges**. Prior to 1988 there were actually three separate villages - *Cheilly-lès-Maranges*, *Dezize-lès-Maranges*, and *Sampigny-lès-Maranges*, and they were all ultimately combined into one appellation now simply called Maranges. Prior to the rule change most wines from here were labeled and sold as "Côte de Beaune Villages", as some things were just too complicated and confusing for even the French!

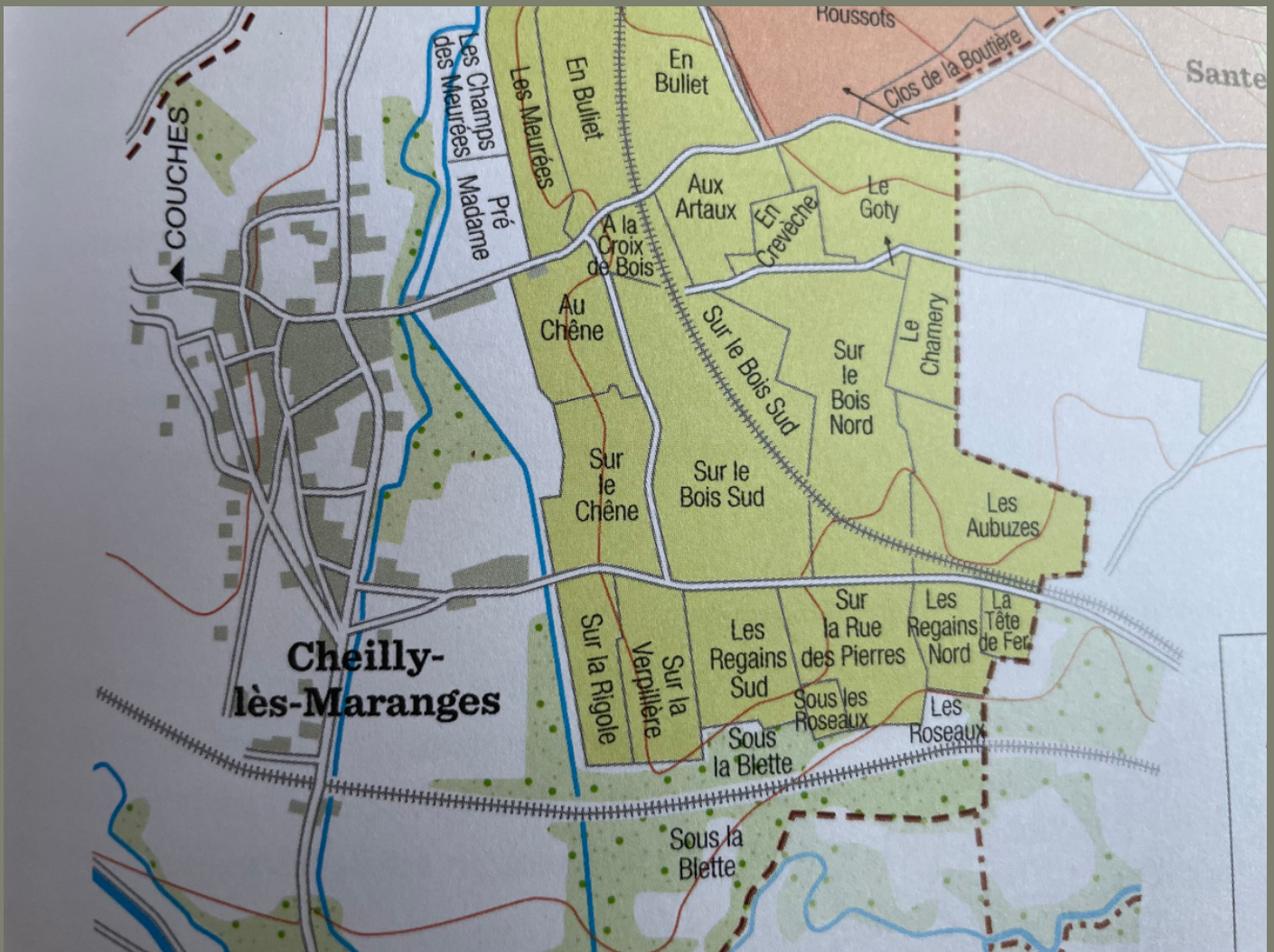
Brothers **Pablo and Vincent Chevrot** are third generation vigneron at the helm of the family estate based in Cheilly-lès-Maranges, with holdings throughout Maranges as well as the neighboring village of Santenay. The Chevrots work organically, plow by horse, and are meticulous farmer-winemakers. Their wines are very well made and always out-perform their appellations, and represent excellent values across the range.

Terroir-wise, Maranges is quite similar to Santenay, with the best parts being a continuation of the hillside of the Santenay 1er Crus, on the same Jurassic limestone. There is not really a distinct Maranges signature, as the geology varies greatly across the three villages.

In this case, "*Sur le Chêne*" is a parcel at the extreme southern limit of Maranges, and it produces a fine, elegant that reminds me of a young Volnay in many ways. Perfumed, lighter bodied, silky on the mid-palate, a wine of pure pleasure.



Old-school farming by horse at Domaine Chevrot



3. **Michel Mallard** - 2017 Ladoix 1er Cru "La Corvée" - \$50



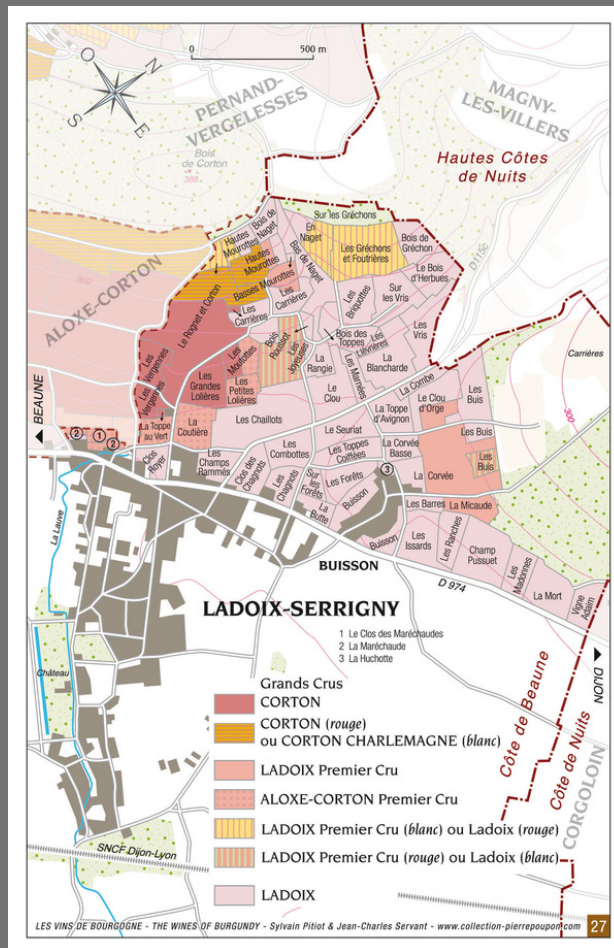
Michel Mallard

From the southern reaches of Maranges, we'll now backtrack up to the village of **Ladoix-Serrigny** - one of the three villages clustered on and around the **Hill of Corton** - the northernmost reaches of the Côte de Beaune (the others being Aloxe-Corton and Pernand-Vergelesses.)

There are multiple 1er Crus in Ladoix-Serigny, though confusingly some of them are considered part of the Aloxe-Corton appellation. There are also two Grand Crus in the village, but these are labelled as Corton! (And you wonder why Burgundy has a reputation for being complicated...)

"*La Corvée*" is a sweet vineyard at the northern end of the village, on the slopes above the hamlet of Buisson. Facing due south, mid-slope, it's a parcel of old vines, planted in the late 1960s. (The name derives from medieval times - "La Corvée" was the name of a tax, basically a form of forced-labor tax. The local serfs were required to farm that land for no remuneration.)

Winemaker **Michel Mallard**, like his father and grandfather, farms the 27-acre estate, which is scattered over five villages and dozens of small parcels. His "La Corvée" is a standout value 1er Cru, a rich and dense red packed with cassis and red currants and a powerful core. This 2017 is the domaine's current release - Mallard holds his wines years longer than most, and releases them when they're starting to mature. They tend to be very long lived - this one you could hold for at least another 5-10 years.



4. Huber-Verdereau 2019 Pommard "En Vaumuriens Hauts" - \$52



Thiébaud Huber

Next will take a look at the famous village of **Pommard**, through the lens of two different single-vineyard wines, from two very distinctly different parts of the village. Pommard tends to produce wines that are deeply colored and relatively tannic, but there are many different shades of that in different sectors of the village. Compared to other villages of the Côte de Beaune, there is much more clay in the soil here, and more iron as well, leading to powerful, well-structured wines that tend to need more time in the bottle to show their best.

"*En Vaumuriens Hauts*" is one of the most interesting Village-level vineyards in Pommard. It sits high on a steep slope, just below the forest, and faces east. All of this combined makes for wines that are crisper and fresher than most Pommard. The weighty tannins are less in evidence here, especially in the skillful hands of winemaker Thiébault Huber. He's been a leader of Burgundy's Biodynamic farming movement for over 20 years now, and treating his vines homeopathically and without chemicals brings out the truest expression of his terroirs. This one shows big black fruits, buffered by a bright acidity that makes it a delicious companion for a great piece of steak or a roast chicken with morels. Yum!



Pommard, with *Vaumuriens Hauts* at top, center below forest

5. Huber-Verdereau 2019 Pommard "Clos du Colombier" - \$72

Pommard is split into two halves, north and south, divided by a small river that was once a much larger waterway that emptied into a massive lake in the Jurassic era. "Clos du Colombier" is a unique vineyard in that it sits right in the middle, and the small stream flows through it on its southern edge. It's a *monopole* of Huber-Verdereau, meaning they own the entirety of the vineyard, a relative rarity in Burgundy - where most vineyards are split between 5-80 different owners.

It's also unusual in that part of the vineyard is classified at the Village level, and a small corner of it is classified 1er Cru (*this portion is technically part of Clos de Verger.*) This portion is too small to vinify and bottle on its own, so the two parts are blended together and legally must be classified as a Village wine.



The Clos du Colombier

Thiébault Huber purchased the Clos (which means "walled-in vineyard") in 2013, and began producing wine from it in the 2014 vintage. The previous owners had been selling all of the grapes to a negociant, so it is essentially brand new as a separate entity.

It's a fascinating terroir, and fairly atypical, as it is neither very Pommard or very Volnay, but is something of a cross between the two. It's big and rich like Pommard can tend to be, but it's softer in texture, more floral on the nose, and is more velvety in the mouth. In all it's a very seductive and immediately appealing wine, with both fruit richness and structure that make it both balanced and built for a good life ahead.



Thiébault and his harvest crew in the Clos du Colombier

6. Albert Joly - 2020 Bourgogne Côte d'Or Chardonnay - \$26



Sylvie Prevot-Joly with her son Quentin

We couldn't do an exploration of the Côte de Beaune without including a white! There is nowhere on the planet where Chardonnay performs better than in Burgundy. The unique combination of soils and climate make this Valhalla for the great white grape. The combination of fruit, acidity, and minerality make white Burgundy some of the most sought-after, and priciest, whites in the world, and with good reason.

Fortunately for us, climate change over the last 25 years has dramatically improved the quality of the "Bourgogne" level vineyards, as we mentioned earlier. The warmer growing seasons now ensure that these vineyards reach optimal ripeness on a regular basis. At this level, the wines remain an excellent value - perhaps none more so than this "humble" Bourgogne from Domaine Albert Joly.

All of Joly's vineyard parcels are in Puligny-Montrachet, with holdings at the Village and Bourgogne levels. This bottling combines their best plots of old-vines at the Bourgogne level with some de-classified Village fruit, making it an exceptional Bourgogne.

Fruit from the Puligny-Montrachet terroir tends to result in a pure, bright, pristine minerality in the wines, with crisp lemon-lime on the palate. This is an outstanding example - showing superb length for a Bourgogne, and an inviting nose of white flowers and citrus fruit that make it immediately appealing. Delicious on its own as an apéritif, or fabulous with cheeses or shellfish - it makes an awesome everyday white.



Puligny-Montrachet

Next shipment in the Fall...

I hope you've enjoyed our continuing exploration of all things Burgundian. Thanks for joining us! Watch your email for information on our next Caveau Burgundy Club shipment coming in the fall, and for pre-arrival offerings on all the yummy wines headed your way throughout the year. All the latest information is always available on our website: **www.CaveauSelections.com**

Please let us know if we need to make any changes to your account. You can update us on our secure form online at <https://www.caveauselections.com/credit-card-update-form>

- If you have a new or updated credit card
- If you have a change of billing or shipping address
- If you want to change your order from "ship" to "pick-up", or vice-versa
- If you have any questions about your Club membership

Launched in 2005, Caveau Selections is owned and operated by Martha & Scott Wright, importers and winemakers in Oregon, Burgundy and Champagne since 1999. Scott has been drinking and studying the wines and regions of Burgundy and Champagne since the 1970s, and visiting regularly since the 1980s. He Co-produced and directed the award winning Burgundy documentary film **Three Days of Glory**, leads annual Insiders' Tours of both Burgundy and Champagne, and teaches seminars here and abroad. Email **Scott@caveauselections.com** for more information.

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