

2008 burgundy - the overperformers

22 Jan 2010 by Jancis Robinson/FT but this is longer

See [Burgundy 2008 - a guide](#) for links to 1,400 reviews of 2008 burgundies and all our other coverage of this very varied vintage.

Some of the 2008 reds I tasted at top domaines in Burgundy in November were absolute marvels of precision and charm, but in general the reds shown at the 27 merchant tastings held in London in the last two weeks were much harder work. There were admirable exceptions but in too many cases their lack of flesh tended to accentuate the high acid and, often, awkward tannins. This acid streak was less jarring in the whites, particularly those made from obviously quite ripe grapes, but there were still some white wines that were physically painful to taste, even at grand cru level. In fact, I thought the proportion of truly inspiring grands crus was a little disappointing, especially in view of their prices.

This seems to be a vintage best suited to showing off burgundy's unusual delicacy and ability to communicate terroir, but one that should be enjoyed relatively early: within five or so years. [Feb 2011 - I now retract that advice and reckon that the best of these wines demand longer ageing, See my [tasting notes](#) from another look at 2008 red burgundy and associated overview.] Many of us remember the 1996s, which were also marked by a high level of acidity that seemed more and more insistent as time went on, and the 2008 wines don't have much stuffing to evolve into something very much more complex.

Thanks to an exchange rate that is very similar to that prevailing when the 2007s were offered 12 months ago, and some growers who have reduced their ex-cellar prices in euros, prices are the same or slightly lower than last year, although there are always producers who can see reasons to ask for more. There seem to be more new producers every year, not least because of Côte d'Or families' tendency to bifurcate, even trifurcate, as well as inter-marrying and regrouping. This year's tastings seemed to bring a plethora of Pillots, a cornucopia of Colins and a virtual morass of Moreaus and Moreys - by no means all of them related.

Although wines from individual cellars varied even more than usual in 2008, the following are what the French call 'coups de coeurs', producers that stood out for me by offering wines of particularly high quality. I list them in very approximate south-to-north order.

First off, Jean-Paul Brun of **Domaine des Terres Dorées** deserves special mention for making some of the most expressive Beaujolais in existence and for making the trek to London himself to introduce them to the occasionally bemused customers of Bordeaux Index. These have to be some of the best-value 2008s around.

Between Beaujolais and the Côte d'Or are the extensive vineyards of the Mâconnais and the Côte Chalonnaise but, while some attractive wines were made here, I did not come across a really outstanding producer in 2008, whereas white wine country in the southern Côte de Beaune is thick with them.

In Chassagne-Montrachet, all of the following seem to be on a roll: **Domaines Bernard Moreau**, **Jean-Marc Pillot**, **Fernand & Laurent Pillot**, and **Paul Pillot**, run by Paul's son Thierry, who now has his own eponymous négociant label, the way so many bright Côte d'Or growers now seem to. **Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey** is going from strength to strength with his négociant label, having left his younger brothers Damien and Joseph in charge of what remains of the old family holdings of Domaine Marc Colin in St-Aubin. Meanwhile, sharing many of the vineyards of the old Domaine Colin-Deleger, brothers **Bruno Colin** and **Philippe Colin** seem to be vying to outdo each other in 2008, delightfully for us white burgundy lovers.

In St-Aubin, **Domaine Hubert Lamy** had a good year in 2008, while **Domaine Paul Pernet** in Puligny-Montrachet was on excellent form right up to grand cru level.

Meursault has its established stars but I was especially impressed by the combination of precision and lusciousness offered by the likes of **Domaines Ballot-Millot**, **Michel Bouzereau**, **Vincent Dancer**, **Patrick Javillier** and both **Antoine** (son and heir of François) and **Rémi Jobard**. Also exceptionally reliable is the négociant label of **Jean-Philippe Fichet**, and 2008 seems to have been a fine swansong for **Domaine Louis Carillon** before being split between the two brothers. But my enthusiasm for the above names is limited to their white, not their red, wines.

Thomas Bouley's time at Felton Road in New Zealand seems to have literally borne fruit in the 2008s of **Domaine Jean-Marc Bouley** in Volnay while in Pommard both 'noble' **Domaines de Montille** and **d'Angerville** seem to have coped well with the vagaries of 2008. In the fleshpots of Beaune, the larger négociants **Drouhin, Champy** and **Chanson** seem to have had a particularly good year, too. Winemaker **Benjamin Leroux's** own négociant label deserves special mention.

Another new name is **Domaine Arnoux-Lachaux**, as Domaine Robert Arnoux is now called, giving due credit to its animus Pascal Lachaux, now joined by his son. Scot **David Clark** has had to buy his own vineyards - including now a patch in Vosne. He seemed unfazed by 2008's demands. Other Côte de Nuits over-performers in this difficult vintage include **Domaines Ghislaine Barthod, Drouhin-Laroze, Jean Grivot, Robert Groffier, Lamarche, Rossignol-Trapet, de Vogüé** and, especially, **Armand Rousseau**.

But perhaps the best-value appellations of all in 2008 are Chablis and Chablis Premier Cru, which can offer seriously wonderful wine for well under £200 a case in bond. I was most impressed by pretty much all wines from **Domaines Jean Brocard, Daniel Dampt, Jean-Paul et Benoît Droin, des Malandes, Louis Michel, Moreau-Naudet** and **Gilbert Picq** as well as many other examples from this far northern outpost of Burgundy.

Julia tasted the wines of some growers whose wines I did not manage to taste and makes the following additional recommendations: **William Fèvre, Pierre Labet, Domaine Thierry et Pascale Matrot, Marc Roy** and **Vincent Dampt**.

One of the most obvious omissions from our reviews is Clos de Tart, ironic in a way when I spent many hours there in November on a magnificent [vertical tasting](#). Clos de Tart used to be fairly widely shown in London in January but is now a Corney & Barrow exclusivity and has not so far, to my knowledge, been shown. Next year I will know to try to taste it at the domaine.

Below are some of the best 2008 burgundies I found at relatively modest prices.

2008 BURGUNDY BARGAINS

Prices are per dozen bottles in bond from UK merchants (current duty is £1.61 a bottle). Note that there are only four red wines.

Dom Clos des Rocs, Mâcon-Loché
£79 Flint Wines

Dom Moreau-Naudet, Petit Chablis
£84 Lea & Sandeman

Dom des Terres Dorées, Fleurie
£95 Bordeaux Index

Dom Jean-Philippe Fichet, Bourgogne Blanc
£99 Berry Bros, Genesis, Goedhuis

Dom Vincent Dancer, Bourgogne Blanc
£110 Justerini & Brooks

Dom Jean-Baptiste Ponsot, Rully Rouge, La Fosse Premier Cru
£124 Flint Wines

Dom Guiton, Beaune, Les Sizies Premier Cru
£135 Flint Wines

Jean-Marc Boillot, Rully Blanc, Meix Cadot Premier Cru
£140 Goedhuis

Dom David Croix, Beaune Rouge
£150 Berry Bros

Dom Louis Michel, Chablis, Montmains Premier Cru
£157 O W Loeb

Dom Moreau-Naudet, Chablis, Forêt Premier Cru
£150 O W Loeb

Dom Paul Pillot, St-Aubin, Charmois Premier Cru
£172 Flint Wines

Dom Vincent Dancer, Meursault, Corbins
£235 Justerini & Brooks

Dom Ballot-Millot, Meursault, Narvaux
£240 Flint Wines

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