

A grand cru in Fixin?

3 Nov 2010 by Jancis Robinson

At the end of my [Burgundy news roundup](#) earlier this week, I mentioned owner Bénigne Joliet's love of his family's premier cru monopole Clos de la Perrière and his, perhaps fanciful, desire to have it recognised as a grand cru.

This walled vineyard up against the forest, high above the village of Fixin just north of Gevrey-Chambertin, has a most impressive history. Planted originally by the Cistercians, the vineyard, miraculously, has never been subdivided between different owners. Below Bénigne spells out the history and geography of the 5-ha plot with its 4 ha of old Pinot Noir that goes into the grand vin Clos de la Perrière, 0.5 ha of young vines bottled as village Fixin with jazzy label and 0.5 ha of Chardonnay for a rather toothsome (and expensive) white Clos de la Perrière.

Bénigne Joliet bought out the rest of his family in 2004, called his friend Philippe Charlopin of Gevrey for advice, and - to the horror of many a neighbour - tripled the price for the 2005s, the first vintage he felt truly expressed the potential of this 700-year-old vineyard. Current ex-cellars prices are 70 euros a bottle for the red and 80 for the white! But the wines are good and definitely worth watching. I'll be including my tasting notes in my big Burgundy 2009 report at the end of January 2011 - and for the moment can say that I was particularly impressed by the 2006 white and the 2008 red. New oak is being reduced but the wines will continue to be bottled relatively late. Soil mapping has helped considerably.

The vaulted, earth-floored cellar in the historic 12th-century Manoir, shown in the short film below, is unusually commodious and atmospheric - containing a 12th-century wooden press as ancient as the one at Clos Vougeot (see tenebrous picture of it to the right and clearer picture of the description of it on the cellar wall above left).

Just a little bit of dusting and Joliet could let it out for banquets and weddings...