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WINE News

*A cool appraisal of our
Burgundy stock.*



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Burgundy: Where Knowledge is King

By Alex Pross

There are several reasons why Burgundy sits atop the wine pyramid.

Nowhere else in the world does Pinot Noir and Chardonnay reach the heights they do in Burgundy. It's one of the oldest and truest wine regions in the world, and it's incredibly nuanced—particular vintages and producers can be wildly inconsistent, and uniformity is rare.

The 2017 vintage was quite a departure from 2015 and 2016, which were both more powerful, cellar-worthy vintages, versus the more user-friendly, drink-now kind of vintage that is 2017—at least for the reds. The whites in 2017 are flat-out excellent, in many cases rivaling the

watershed vintage of 2014 in terms of depth, quality, and cut. The 2017s are great to get acquainted with and enjoy, without having to be too cerebral about things. The 2018 vintage, however, is looking like a much more challenging vintage to wrap your head around. It was intensely hot and dry for much of the growing season, which challenged producers and returns us to an old axiom in Burgundy: trust the producer, not the vintage. There are many stupendous wines coming out of the 2018 vintage, but you would be wise to ask questions, or trust producers you have loved in the past.

2017 J.J. Vincent Bourgogne Blanc (\$17.99)

An amazing value sourced from vineyards near Mâcon and Pouilly-Fuissé, this wine is a tribute to Jean-Jacques Vincent, who managed Château Fuissé for 40 years. The 2017 J.J. Vincent Bourgogne Blanc is 70% vinified in stainless steel, with the remaining 30% seeing six months in oak barrels. The resulting wine is fresh and lively, with nuanced flavors of vanilla and fresh orchard apples. The wine has nice density and persistence, with a long, elegant finish. This is the ideal Bourgogne blanc that allows you to drink like a Parisian without breaking the bank.

2017 Château de Chemilly Chablis (\$19.99)

Perhaps no other region in Burgundy has undergone a greater turnaround. Chablis went from being one of the most important wine regions in France to almost extinction in the 1950s, and then back to a thriving, excelling region. This is an exciting wine, with vibrant citrus notes, zesty flavors of sea breeze, wet stone, and a hint of minerality. A smart choice for crab season or as an aperitif, the 2017 de Chemilly is the quintessential Chablis value.

96 DC



2017 Domaine Faiveley Mercurey 1er Cru

“Clos des Myglands” (\$42.99) Faiveley's new facility in the middle of Mercurey affords them the luxury of being able to pick fruit at its optimal level, without the worry of transporting it too far. A wine that straddles the line perfectly between Old and New World with just enough fruit to and complexity to satisfy both the Burgundy enthusiast and novice, this is loaded with red and black fruits, supple tannins, and a long, sumptuous finish.

93 WS, 92 JS, 91 RP





The view from the cellar of Jacques Bavard, on a past winter's day.

A Sublime Set of 2017s from Jacques Bavard

On my annual trip to Burgundy, one of the appointments I look forward to most is the one at **Maison Jacques Bavard**. Jacques Bavard has been a valuable partner for many years, as his wines seemingly get better every year, while the pricing is pretty much unchanged. The 2017 vintage has lined up perfectly here, with seductive whites and sumptuous reds that tingle with excitement. It is plain to see that Jacques Bavard continues to hone his winemaking skill set. His seven 2017 offerings are further proof of his abilities.

Right out the gate, the very first wine from Jacques Bavard is a knockout! The **2017 Jacques Bavard Bourgogne Blanc (\$24.99)** is delicious. Loaded with Meyer lemon, orchard fruit, and hazelnut flavors, this lavish offering has density and weight, with great palate presence and wonderful texture.

The **2017 Jacques Bavard Bourgogne Rouge (\$24.99)** is no slouch either. Sappy red and black fruits, along with subtle spice notes, swirl around a zesty mid-palate and a silky finish to produce an intoxicating red Burgundy for daily consumption.

Taking a slight step up the price ladder, we come to the **2017 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses Rouge (\$29.99)**, a wine that hails from one of Burgundy's hottest and most up-and-coming regions for value.

Auxey-Duresses is known for being able to produce reds of impressive depth and character without breaking the bank—and the 2017 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses Rouge is no exception. This wine has an abundance of black fruits, black tea, red apple, and fresh cherry flavors. The palate unwinds to reveal complex notes of fruit, coffee, and cola. This is a beautiful red that offers a deeper experience than the Bourgogne Rouge. If you're looking for value in Burgundy, then Auxey-Duresses is the place you should be.



Our last four offerings are where Jacques Bavard really has made a name for himself. Jacques does a wonderful job of crafting distinctive whites from Auxey-Duresses, Santenay, St-Romain, and St-Aubin.

The **2017 Jacques Bavard Auxey-Duresses Blanc "Les Clous" (\$34.99)** starts off with a delicate nose of pears, white flowers, and spice. The palate unfolds to reveal poached pear and orchard fruit flavors, along with a richly textured mouthfeel and an almost Meursault-like richness.

The **2017 Jacques Bavard Santenay Blanc "Sous la Roche" (\$34.99)** has a flintier nose, as well as an abundance of stone fruits. Notes of butterscotch give way to green fig and fresh herbs. The finish is energetic and lively, with a splash of acidity, and then a long caress of the palate, as the flavors slowly fade one by one.

The **2017 Jacques Bavard St-Romain Blanc "Sous le Château" (\$34.99)** feels very much like a baby Corton-Charlemagne. The nose is rich, with tropical notes and drawn butter aromas that give way to a palate packed with flavors of mango, papaya, and pear that mingle with smooth tannins and rich oak nuances. This is a rich, full-bodied white that drinks like a Grand Cru for a fraction of the cost.

We finish with new offering from Jacques Bavard, and hopefully one that we will continue to see. The **2017 Jacques Bavard St-Aubin 1er Cru "Fronnes" (\$44.99)** comes from a large plot situated on the western side that is renowned for producing powerful whites. The nose here is incredibly seductive, with aromas of yellow pears and Golden Delicious apples, while the palate is super smooth with spice, stone fruit, and an almost waxy feel. The wine is very rich and textured, with complexity and depth rarely found in a white Burgundy for under \$50. This is a wonderful wine and a great insight into the heights Jacques Bavard is achieving.



Value Burgundies—All Under \$20

Burgundy suffers from some of the same assumptions that Bordeaux does: the perception that all of the wines are expensive, only because the best-known, and most visible examples are pricey. However, just as there are hundreds of inexpensive Bordeaux designed for daily consumption, there is an ocean of inexpensive Burgundy that's made to be consumed on a daily basis. The key is separating the wheat from the chaff. Here we have 10 wines for under \$20 that represent amazing value, and are sure to merit additional purchasing once you try them.

It's a bit easier to find under-\$20 white Burgundy than red. Thus, we have a selection of seven wonderful values for you. We'll start up north, in Chablis, with two stunning wines that are sure to put a smile on your face. The **2018 Domaine Gerard Tremblay Petit Chablis (\$17.99)** sings from the glass with notes of wet stone, iodine, sea breeze, and citrus. Surprising depth and structure make this a wonderful wine to pair with crab, seafood, or roast chicken. This gives great insight into the quality of Petit Chablis.

Another longtime favorite and perennial great bargain is the **2018 Domaine Jean-Marc Brocard Chablis "Domaine Sainte Claire" (\$19.99)**. This is classic Chablis in character, with a tangy feel and flavors of lemon and yellow fruits. Good length and structure make this a buy-today, drink-tonight Chablis that excels as an under-\$20 value. **90 JS**

As we venture farther south, we come to the Mâcon, the motherland of Burgundy value. We have been lucky to establish a strong relationship with Vignerons des Terres Secretes. A cooperative much in the same vein as La Chablisienne in Chablis, they are producing extraordinary values given their capacity. The **2017 Vignerons des Terres Secretes Mâcon Verzé "Croix Jarrier" (\$14.99)** is a great example of the quality of the 2017 vintage for whites. Loaded with fresh citrus fruit and crackling minerality, this bright and zesty offering is a fun and fabulous Mâcon white that easily merits case purchases. **90 DC**



Right on the heels of the Mâcon Verzé, the **2017 Vignerons des Terres Secretes Macon Milly-Lamartine Blanc (\$14.99)** leans more toward the orchard fruit spectrum than citrus, with a tad more structure and depth. This wine has a more serious and cerebral feel.

There's a dazzling array of Bourgogne blancs out there, and we have a great trio that gives you three distinct interpretations from different producers and appellations. The **2017 Château de la Maltroie Bourgogne Aligote (\$17.99)** comes from one of my favorite producers, famous for crafting some of the best Chassagne-Montrachet. The Aligote here is outstanding, with the leanness and licorice notes one expects from an Aligote as well as the zesty acidity. As the climate has warmed, Aligotes have become a bit more forgiving. This is a wonderful example of that upside.

At the **2016 Domaine Philippe Bouzereau Bourgogne Blanc "Château de Citeaux" (\$19.99)** provides more body and structure. The wine is richly textured with grapefruit, beeswax, and oak nuances all set against a bold palate. This is a great example of a powerful Bourgogne blanc.

We finish with a new find. The **2017 Prosper Maufoux Hautes Côtes de Beaune Blanc (\$19.99)** a focused white that delivers deep citrus fruit notes as well as subtle spice and mineral notes. The fruit is so pure here, that it virtually echoes throughout the palate all the way to a long, lively finish.

It's a bit more difficult to uncover great red Burgundy values for under \$20, but I do have a fun little trio. The **2017 Domaine Dupre Bourgogne Rouge (\$17.99)** is a fun and fresh red with crunchy red fruit, a pinch of spice, and cola notes to round out this tasty little value.

The **2017 Domaine De La Belouse Bourgogne Rouge Pinot Noir (\$19.99)** has a bit more structure than the Dupre, and more black fruit and dark spice notes. This is a firmly structured red that should appeal to those seeking a fuller, deeper red than the usual entry-level Bourgogne rouge.

Lastly, the **2016 Joseph Faiveley Bourgogne Pinot Noir (\$19.99)** is in a wonderful place currently. Always a meaty wine, it has really opened up of late. Dark fruits cede to wonderful aromas of macerated berries and cola notes. The palate is robust and feels very Côte de Nuits, with a subtle nod towards Gevrey. This is a wonderful Bourgogne rouge, and easily drinks like a wine double the price.



At K&L's Redwood City store, your adventure in Burgundy begins at any price point.



Maison Joseph Drouhin has a long history with Hospices de Beaune.

Precision: Joseph Drouhin's 2017 Burgundy

I have long been an admirer of the wines of Joseph Drouhin. They have always been elegantly structured, with beautiful fruit—never tart or overbearing. The 2017s from Joseph Drouhin are an exciting set of wines. They provide ample value, too, from entry-level reds to expressive village-level whites. Located in the heart of the town of Beaune, Joseph Drouhin has a winemaking history that dates back to 1880. Like many négociant houses, they both own vineyards as well as contract fruit. But their adherence to excellence shows through in every wine they produce, whether at the domaine or négociant level.

I love the red wines from Joseph Drouhin in 2017. We have four stellar offerings at great pricing. The **2017 Joseph Drouhin Côte de Nuits-Villages (\$27.99)** is a wonderful example of Côte de Nuits red, showing pretty red fruit, cranberry and Bing cherry flavors, and elegant structure.

The **2017 Joseph Drouhin Côte de Beaune-Villages (\$29.99)** clearly demonstrates what the Côte de Beaune is all about. Meatier than the Côte de Nuits, with a touch more earth and darker fruit flavors, this is a robust red that slowly unfurls on the palate.

The **2017 Joseph Drouhin Santenay (\$29.99)** is classically Santenay in character, with high-toned red fruit, subtle spice notes, and a touch of dried herb. It's a crisp red that dazzles the palate with lively red fruit and earth tones.

Wrapping up the quartet of reds, we have one of my go-to wines. The **2017 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Gevrey-Chambertin (\$59.99)** is a standard-bearer for the appellation. Loaded with purple fruit, cola notes, spice, and a touch of minerality, this sleek and sexy offering is exactly what one wants from a Gevrey-Chambertin. **92 JS, 89-91 RP, 89-91 BH**

As much as I love the reds from Drouhin, I think that in 2017 they've been outclassed by the whites. We've spoken at length about the quality of the 2017 vintage for whites, and when you taste what Drouhin has accomplished in their village-level offerings from Meursault, Chassagne-Montrachet, and Puligny-Montrachet, you will be amazed. We begin with the **2017 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Meursault (\$59.99)** a critic favorite and a full-bodied offering that displays citrus, stone, and creamy oak flavors. A richly textured wine, it has all the marks of a fine Meursault, and a great finish. **93 WS, 92 JS**

The **2017 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Chassagne-Montrachet (\$69.99)** is a stunner. With an array of stone fruits and peach notes, this gorgeous offering is absolutely singing right now. It's a wonderful example of a fine Chassagne. **92 JS, 91 JG, 90 VN**

We end with my personal favorite appellation, Puligny-Montrachet. When Puligny "hits," it has this refined sense of pristine mountain water flowing over smooth stones, and orchard fruit picked at its peak of ripeness, all rolled into a fine white wine.

The **2017 Domaine Joseph Drouhin Puligny-Montrachet (\$69.99)** has all the above-mentioned attributes in spades. This wine is pure and fresh with mineral notes woven throughout its orchard fruit-dominated core. A truly enjoyable white that personifies what Puligny-Montrachet should strive to attain. **92 WS, 92 JS, 91 VN**



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