

# WINE News

*Fresh picks in Burgundy.*



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## Burgundy: A Time of Renewed Enthusiasm

By Alex Pross

**There is no other wine region in the world that’s quite like Burgundy.**

It stretches like a snake from Chablis in the north all the way down to the Mâconnais and Beaujolais in the south, where some of the world’s greatest wine values can be found. Yes, the Rhône Valley and areas of Spain can fashion some wonderful wines for under \$30, and even under \$20, but no region can touch the complexity and elegance that can be found for under \$30 from the Mâcon and Beaujolais.

With a string of strong vintages from 2014 through 2017 (and 2018 looks to be strong as well), Burgundy is in a really good spot right now. Even

more encouraging is seeing the number of younger customers picking up bottles of Burgundy. With the general shift toward lighter, fresher, and more farm-to-table cuisine, wines of lower alcohol, higher acidity, and more balance—wines like Burgundy, Chablis, and Beaujolais—are natural foils for today’s food trends and tastes.

I leave in a few weeks to tour Burgundy and meet with our producers, and also to try to gain insight into the 2017 and 2018 vintages. I look forward to reporting back about our team’s thoughts, tastings, and discoveries in Burgundy.

### 2016 Olivier Leflaive Bourgogne Blanc

“Les Sétilles” (\$19.99) I think any wine that was good enough to be served at the Royal Wedding is good enough for me. It is hard to beat the quality we have here in this roughly 50-50 blend of grapes sourced from the communes of Puligny-Montrachet and Meursault. This layered, energetic and classically styled Bourgogne blanc is an amazing white Burgundy bargain at under \$20! **91 JS**



### 2016 Jean-Michel Dupré “1935” Morgon

(\$14.99) This is a perennial best value and easily one of the greatest buys we have at K&L Wine Merchants. Sourced from vines planted in 1935, this full-bodied red wine is so juicy and succulent it can easily be enjoyed on its own or paired with spicy cuisines like Thai, Mexican or Mediterranean. **93 WE, 92 VN**



### 2016 Joseph Faiveley Bourgogne Rouge

(\$19.99) The never-ending search for an enjoyable, quaffable, yet affordable Bourgogne rouge has led us to Domaine Faiveley—easily one of the best *négociant* houses in Burgundy. Crisp red cherry fruit is buffered nicely by hints of oak, earth, and herbs, all of which make this a wonderful entry-level Burgundy for those looking for value and complexity.



Cover: “Springtime excitement,” photo courtesy of Domaine Faiveley.

## La Chablisienne: “The Queen of Chablis”

I just can't say enough about La Chablisienne. There just aren't enough superlatives to describe the incredible value and outrageous quality they consistently deliver vintage-to-vintage across numerous vineyards. From village level all the way up to Grand Cru, La Chablisienne excels at delivering exceptional quality for the price.

A cooperative located in Chablis, La Chablisienne produces 30 wines, including 13 Premier Cru and seven Grand Cru vineyard wines. They work with over 100 growers and have strict contracts in place in order to ensure the highest quality.

With their myriad vineyards, one of the positives about working with La Chablisienne is that we have multiple vintages for you to choose from. If you would like a Chablis with a few years on it, we have the **2013 La Chablisienne Chablis Grand Cru “Grenouilles” (\$69.99)**, which comes from a vineyard that Chablisienne has a large holding in and is world-renowned for rich, full-bodied Chablis that both age gracefully and supply immediate pleasure. **93 BH, 90 RP**



The 2014 Chablis vintage is recognized as one of the best in recent memory, and we are lucky to be able to source two fantastic Premier Cru offerings from this watershed vintage—both selling for under \$30 a bottle. First up is my favorite, the **2014 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru “Côte de Léchet” (\$27.99)**. A Chablis that is almost perfect, loaded with citrus, chalk, saline, and tropical notes, this multifaceted beauty is drinking like a Grand Cru at about a quarter of the price tag. **95 DC, 92 WE, 91 BH**

Just a smidge behind is the **2014 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru “Beauroy” (\$26.99)**, a fuller, more rounded Chablis that offers up exotic fruits, notes of iodine and flint, as well as a zesty, citrus-infused finish. This amazing trio of wines from 2013 and 2014 offers a great look at delicious Chablis with a bit of age on it. **93 DC, 90 RP**

The 2015 vintage in Chablis was a warm one, and the corresponding wines are rounder, less lean and tend to have a bit more heft to them than wines from a cooler vintage. Surprisingly, in my opinion, these wines have taken a bit more time to come around and are now peacocking for all the world to see.

The **2015 La Chablisienne Chablis “La Sereine” (\$17.99)** derives its name from the river that flows through the region, and in many ways is a quintessential example of Chablis, an entry-level offering that has all the telltale notes one would expect from Chablis: salinity, citrus, flint, minerals, and a hint of orchard fruits, all rolled up into a medium-bodied wine that sells for under \$20.



If you want something that feels a bit richer and fuller, the **2015 La Chablisienne Chablis “Les Venerables” Vieilles Vignes (\$19.99)** comes from vines that average 35 years of age, and the wine sees some time in barrel. This is a great option for those looking for a fuller-bodied Chablis.

We finish the 2015s with the **2015 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru “Vaulorent” (\$34.99)** from a vineyard adjacent to the Grand Cru vineyard Preuses. This amazing vineyard delivers a large-scaled wine loaded with deep orchard fruits, crushed stone, and finishing with vanilla and white flower accents. It's a wine that can often compete qualitatively with Grand Crus at about half the price. **92 DC, 90 RP, 90-92 BH**



The 2016 vintage across Burgundy was challenging thanks to hail, frost, and mildew. Across all of Burgundy, yields were down anywhere from as little as 30% to as much as 80%, or in some truly extreme cases, 100%. While yields were drastically down, quality was surprisingly strong thanks to some late warm and consistently dry weather in both August and September that saved the vintage. While they may be small in quantity, we have three great wines from the 2016 vintage from La Chablisienne. The **2016 La Chablisienne Chablis 1er Cru “Montée de Tonnerre” (\$29.99)** is a universally hailed wine from all the major critics and comes from one of the most prestigious terroirs, nestled right next to the Grand Cru vineyards Les Clos and Blanchot. Richly textured, with zesty lemon and sea breeze flavors, this full-bodied, complex, and layered offering is easily one of the best buys we have at K&L currently. **91 BH, 91 VN, 90 RP**

As much as I love a good Premier Cru, I truly adore Grand Cru Chablis. Unfortunately, I don't have the budget to drink these on a daily basis. La Chablisienne, however, has two affordable Grand Crus from the 2016 vintage, both at under \$60, that allow you to enjoy the best of what Chablis has to offer without emptying your wallet. The **2016 La Chablisienne Chablis Grand Cru “Preuses” (\$59.99)** is a classic example of Preuses, with subtle flint and lime blossom notes framed against an elegantly structured and complex frame. This wine always seems to be in a more feminine mold, while the **2016 La Chablisienne Chablis Grand Cru “Bougros” (\$59.99)** is a more broad-shouldered offering. With exotic fruits and strong flint and mineral notes, this is a decidedly more masculine style.



## If You Don't Know Beaujolais, It's About Time You Did!

The world of wine is an odd amalgamation of fashion, art, farming, luxury goods, and good old economics of supply and demand, all wrapped up into a nice little package you ingest.

I think this is one of the reasons that conventional economic analysis has struggled to effectively quantify where the next wine boom may come from. A perfect case in point is Beaujolais. This once sleepy, neglected and overlooked region, once the red-headed stepchild of Burgundy, is now stepping into its own. With wines perfectly placed to complement today's cooking, coupled with a young and energized group of vigneron, Beaujolais sales have been on an uptick for the last few years, and there's little sign of this growth relenting. I can tell you that I drink a ton of Beaujolais nowadays because it does match so much of what I am eating. And the Gamay grape has low tannin levels, so it doesn't fight spice and heat like a lot of varietal reds can do.

Values abound in Beaujolais, starting with the **2017 Jean-Michel Dupré "Vignes de 1940" Beaujolais Villages (\$10.99)** that showcases the great 2017 Beaujolais vintage. Magenta in the glass, with notes of spice and boysenberry, this crunchy red is the perfect foil for a picnic, pizza, or entertaining a large outdoor gathering. If you're looking for a bit more power and depth, the **2016 Les Frères Perroud "Amethyste" Brouilly (\$15.99)** is the wine for you. With loads of black fruits, hints of chocolate, and scorched earth, this deep, dark wine is made for barbecue and burgers. Feel like going off the beaten trail? The **2016 Château de Javernand "Indigène" Chiroubles (\$17.99)** offers a funkier take on Beaujolais, with notes of licorice, earth, and minerals, as well as deep raspberry and lavender flavors that make this stunning wine a great example of an "old world" Beaujolais.

I feel that a great introduction to Burgundy is better with a nice, top-notch Beaujolais than an entry-level red Burgundy from Côte-d'Or.

Fleurie is known for its pink granitic soil that helps to foster elegant and aromatic red wines, which benefit from a slight chill. We are lucky to have three great examples of this wonderful terroir. The **2017 Clos de la Roilette Fleurie (\$19.99)** comes from one of the region's better-known producers. This notably long-lived wine is packed with red fruits and wildflower aromas. **92 RP, 90 JS**

A step up in both structure and price, the **2017 Clos de la Roilette Fleurie "Cuvée Tardive" (\$23.99)** is a bigger, deeper, more structured offering that will reward a few years of cellaring. **93 RP**



Finishing up our stay in Fleurie, the **2017 Domaine Chignard Fleurie "Les Moriers" (\$24.99)** is loaded with strawberry and spice flavors. The approachable style makes it ideal for early drinking. **92 JS**

Another one of my favorite Cru sites is Julienas. Known for its blue volcanic rock soils and earthier and more full-bodied reds, this region flies under the radar. The **2017 Domaine Chignard Julienas "Beauvernavy" (\$23.99)** is a great introduction to Julienas. Packed with dark black fruits, sweet spices, and racy acidity, this supple red wine is flat-out delicious. **90 RP**

One of Beaujolais' cult producers is Marcel Lapierre. His **2017 Marcel Lapierre Julienas "Cousins" (\$29.99)** is an amazing rendition from 60-year-old vines grown on granite soils. The Julienas "Cousins" is made by Lapierre with Christophe Pacalet. They each vinify their own cuvée of Julienas, and after malolactic fermentation they blend together equal parts of their cuvées. The wine is whole-cluster fermented in conical wood tanks and aged in neutral wood for nine months. The resulting wine is sinewy, with red fruits, spice, racy acidity, and a sprinkle of funk. An ideal wine for those looking to explore the natural wine movement.

Brouilly and Côte de Brouilly (inside of greater Brouilly) are two of the more visible Grand Crus you're likely to see in restaurants and stores. Brouilly tends to create more aromatic and elegant wines, while Côte de Brouilly is known for more intense and robust reds.

One of my favorite producers is Château Thivin, and they have two wines that are tasting wonderfully right now. The **2017 Château Thivin "Reverdon" Brouilly (\$24.99)** showcases all that is great about Brouilly: minerals, spice, and black fruits all dance against a racy backdrop of acidity and complexity. This wine may be the best rendition this winery has ever produced! **94 JS, 93 RP**

The **2017 Château Thivin Côte de Brouilly (\$26.99)** hails from a small hamlet inside of Brouilly. Deeper and richer than the Reverdon, this superb offering has depth and concentration rarely seen in a Beaujolais. **94 RP**

Often overlooked but quite possibly one of the most understated values in all of Brouilly, the **2017 Nicole Chanrion Côte de Brouilly "Domaine de la Voûte des Crozes" (\$21.99)** is always a bright, zesty red with a strong core of red currant and red cherry fruit. A consistent winner year in and year out.

I'd be remiss to leave out two of my favorites. The **2017 Jean Foillard Beaujolais-Villages (\$23.99)** is a sleek, open-knit offering that delivers loads of fresh, supple and pure berry fruit perfectly accented by spice and just the right amount of acidity and tannin.

Moulin-a-Vent has been lovingly called the Burgundy of Beaujolais. The **2017 Domaine Diochon Moulin-à-Vent (\$24.99)** is classic. Red fruits mix against subtle floral aromas and a hint of jasmine tea. A pretty and supple offering that delicately caresses the palate but has impressive length, this is the epitome of what Beaujolais and Moulin-à-Vent should strive for. **90 RP, 90 WS**

# 2017 Henri Boillot: The Master from Meursault

There are a few producers that I really look forward to tasting every year, and Henri Boillot is one of them. Henri Boillot took over the family operation from his father in 1975 and his son Guillaume joined him in 2008, assuming responsibility for making the red wines in 2011. Father and son now work together across multiple terroirs with the aim to craft fantastic red and white wines that display their various Burgundian terroirs. Their goal is to fashion wines of precision and purity with depth and elegance. If you haven't yet discovered the wines of Henri Boillot, you owe it to yourself to try their amazing offerings.

Henri Boillot put himself on the map with his wondrous white wines, and these run the gamut, from entry-level all the way up to regal Montrachet. In 2017, the acidity and ripeness levels were almost ideal. As much as I was in love with the 2014 white Burgundies, I think the 2017s may be their equals. The **2017 Maison Henri Boillot Bourgogne Blanc (\$29.99)** blew me away. Blended from grapes attained from Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, St-Romain, and Auxey-Duresses, this felt like a village Meursault. Showing ample orchard fruit, flint, and spice, this is a screaming value and can easily win over almost any crowd.

As prices begin to soar in Burgundy it's nice to still be able to get a fantastic Meursault for only \$60. The **2017 Henri Boillot Meursault (\$59.99)** has fabulous concentration, with flint, peach, and pear flavors nicely buffered by acidity and fine-grained tannins, all woven together in a seamless and long-finishing package.

On to the big guns of white Burgundy. Henri Boillot has quite a stable, and his Grand Cru offerings are absolutely thrilling. The **2017 Henri Boillot Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru (\$189.99)** is a stunner, with lemon oil, citrus, and minerals making this an irresistible Grand Cru. **93-95 RP, 92-95 VN**

If you're feeling flush after taxes, then we have the **2017 Henri Boillot Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru (\$549.99)**, a true masterpiece of white wine with intense citrus, hazelnut, and lemon oil flavors. Powerful yet lithe, this is why you pay the tariff for Monty! **94-96 RP, 93-96 VN**



With all the attention paid to the white wines of Henri Boillot, the reds sometimes get overlooked. This is a shame—no, actually a travesty, since they are great in their own right. The reds are made by Henri Boillot's son, Guillaume. A great wine to get a feel for what he is doing is the **2017 Henri Boillot Bourgogne Rouge (\$29.99)**. This wine is loaded with pretty red fruit, lots of minerals, and an energetic blast of acidity and verve. This classic Bourgogne rouge is crisp and bright, with zest and fruit for days.

As we climb the ladder a bit, Volnay is a region where Boillot has put down some enviable roots, and we have two killer offerings from this desirable village. The **2017 Henri Boillot Volnay 1er Cru "Les Frémiets" (\$99.99)** leaps across the palate with red and black fruits, tobacco, and earth, all framed by firm tannins and racy acidity. The **2017 Henri Boillot Volnay 1er Cru "Caillerets" (\$109.99)** is a densely red-fruited treat with sexy aromas of spice and dried flowers. This seductive red is a Volnay worth imbibing. **92-94 RP**

If you fancy a Grand Cru, Henri Boillot has quite a lineup. The **2017 Henri Boillot Clos Vougeot Grand Cru (\$189.99)** is a classic example of this large Grand Cru site, showing lots of red cherry fruit. Deep and pure, this big red wine is a Burgundy built for a Cabernet fan. **91-93 RP**

If you crave something a bit greater, the **2017 Henri Boillot Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru (\$329.99)** is a powerful expression of Bonnes-Mares, with dark fruit and a dark edge. This spicy, deep red is a powerhouse of a wine. **92-94 RP, 91-93 VN**

Last but most certainly not least is the **2017 Henri Boillot Chambertin-Clos de Beze Grand Cru (\$369.99)**, a regal offering with all the polish and poise one would expect from this fantastic site. Layer upon layer of seamless berry fruit intertwined with spice and smoke make this an unbelievably good red wine and well worth the credit card bill. **92-94 RP**



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