



GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN
A TASTING AT ROBERSON WINE

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH 2008

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN THE VINEYARDS



A: CHAMBERTIN

GRAND CRU

What is now Gevrey's top vineyard, and indeed the suffix to the village's name, was born long ago in far more modest circumstances.

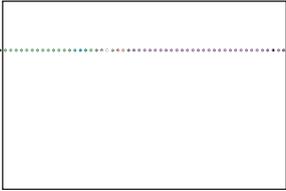
The name was originally 'Champ de Bertin' (Bertin's field), and was planted by Monseieur Bertin in an attempt to emulate the success of monks that had began making wine from next door Clos de Bèze. Today the 12.9 hectare site yields some of Burgundy's finest Pinot Noir, and the resultant wines are full, firm and structured in their early years before the best examples blossom into rich and generous wines of enormous depth.

"I forget the name of the place; I forget the name of the girl; but the wine... was Chambertin."

Hilaire Belloc

B: CLOS DE BÈZE

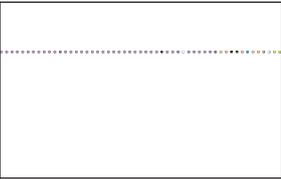
GRAND CRU



Clos de Bèze was planted in the 7th century by monks from the nearby Abbey de Bèze, and although the wines have always enjoyed an exalted reputation of their own, they have never quite reached the esteem in which Bertin's field is held.

Interestingly, wines from the larger (15.4 ha) Clos de Bèze vineyard can be labelled as Chambertin Grand Cru, although the same is not allowed in reverse. Such is the reputation of the Clos that it is not common practice for producers to label it as Chambertin, although for those domaines that own only small holdings it does allow for blending the two parcels together in the winery.

The name 'Clos' refers, of course, to a walled vineyard although there is little evidence left of the wall that used to surround Clos de Bèze.



C: MAZIS-CHAMBERTIN

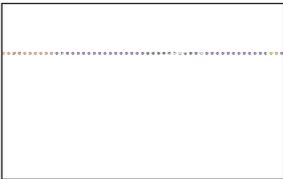
GRAND CRU

Mazis-Chambertin, or Mazy as it is sometimes spelt, is the Grand Cru vineyard that borders Clos de Bèze on its northern side (or right hand side on the map).

Totalling an area of 9.1 ha, the vineyard is divided in two sections: Haut (the upper section) and Bas (the lower). The wines from Mazis-Haut are considered by many to be the closest rival to the 'big two' Chambertin vineyards, especially the examples from Leroy and Rousseau.

The largest owner of land in Mazis is the Hospices de Beaune, whose parcel of vines is in the upper section of the vineyard. The Cuvée Madelaine Collignon is consistently one of the most attractive wines at their annual auction.

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN THE VINEYARDS



D: CHARMES-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU

Wines from both the Charmes and Mazoyères Grands Crus vineyards can be labelled and sold as Charmes-Chambertin (although Charmes cannot be called Mazoyères), although in practice this is only done by Camus - and this is because they own vines in both climats.

Charmes is often seen as being the weakest of Gevrey's Grands Crus, thanks in large part to the large number of landholders (over 40) and the fact that the vines run all the way down the slope to the main road at the bottom. While there are many mediocre wines to be found from this combined vineyard area of 30.82 ha, some examples such as those from Roty, Bachelet and the various parts of the Dugat/Humbert family are superb wines from venerable vines.

Indeed, the original Roty vines date back to the 19th century and are labelled as 'Tres Vieilles Vignes'!

E: CLOS ST JACQUES 1ER CRU



Seen as the the top 1er Cru vineyard in Gevrey, and arguably all of Burgundy (at least for reds), it is deemed a travesty by many commentators that the 6.7 ha of Clos St Jacques were never awarded Grand Cru status when the classification was done.

Its' problem seems to be due to its geographic position on the Combe de Lavaux, a slope behind the village that is not contiguous with the other grands crus. When the classification was being done it was decided that if a vineyard didn't abut either of the two Chambertin vineyards, then the terroir could not be good enough to warrant Grand Cru status.

In the Rousseau cellar the wine is trumped by only the Chambertin and Clos de Bèze, and tasters are given it to try after the Mazis and Ruchottes.



F: LES CORBEAUX 1ER CRU

Located next to Mazis-Chambertin, Les Corbeaux actually lost 0.6 ha of vineyard to its' Grand Cru neighbour when the boundaries were redrawn in 1855.

Today the vineyard covers 3.21 hectares, with the most impressive wines made by Bachelet, Serafin and Bruno Clavelier.

These are masculine wines of structure and controlled intensity, that while lacking the complexity of a good Clos St Jacques, are certainly among the better 1er Cru wines in the village.

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN THE PRODUCERS

Domaine Alain Burguet

There are not many domaines in Burgundy that were built from scratch in the last 35 or so years – fewer still that have gathered an enviable reputation in such a short space of time.

Alain Burguet is one such producer. Based in Gevrey-Chambertin, the domaine is fully organic and uses very little sulphur in the production of their wines, although Alain does not shout about this or use it as a marketing gimmick. He was one of the few Burgundy producers that shunned the use of chemicals and pesticides during the '70s and 80's, and as a result of that his vines are some of the healthiest on the Côte de Nuits today.

Domaine Denis Bachelet

This domaine has been run entirely by Denis Bachelet since he took over in 1983, although his son is now working closely alongside him. The domaine is based in Gevrey-Chambertin and is a small estate of around 4 hectares, but what it lacks in size it certainly makes up for in beauty.

His style is one of masculine elegance, with restrained oak, pure fruit and perfect balance. Due to the tiny quantities in which the wines are produced they have become some of the most sought after in all of Burgundy.

His 'Les Corbeaux' is recognised as being the best wine of the vineyard, and that is what we will be tasting tonight.

Domaine Denis Mortet

The name Denis Mortet is one that resonates with drinkers and producers of Burgundy. This was a man that revolutionised his family domaine and influenced a generation of young winemakers in Gevrey-Chambertin and beyond, before tragically taking his own life in 2006.

Mortet was famous for treating even his 'humble' village wines (such as the Au Velle that we will taste tonight) as if they were Grand Cru cuveés. The wines are all of the highest quality and have their own sense of style – Rich, full and utterly delicious with a meaty, earthy, almost bestial quality.

Now it is his son Arnaud in charge and the ethos has very much remained the same.

Domaine Bernard Dugat-Py

Bernard Dugat runs this wonderful domaine with his wife Jocelyne (her maiden name is Py) and although they have only been estate bottling their wine (rather than selling it off in bulk) since 1989, their reputation is already an exalted one. Bernard comes from a very serious wine making family, with his cousins (Claude Dugat and Humbert Frères) also making fantastic wines in the same village.

The Cuvée 'Coeur de Roy' is made from a selection of the domaine's best village fruit from vines between 50 - 90 years of age.

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN THE PRODUCERS

Domaine Frédéric Esmonin

Frédéric's father, André, was the highly respected Gevrey grower who produced the grand cru Mazis-Chambertin for the Hospice de Beaune.

Frédéric owns 7 ha including holdings of Gevrey-Chambertin 'Clos-Prieur' and the 1er Cru 'Estournelles' and 'Lavaux-St-Jacques', in addition to his Mazis-Chambertin and Ruchottes-Chambertin. The Clos de Vougeot and Chambertin are negociant wines made with parcels of bought-in fruit.

Esmonin's Mazis is often seen as being one of the best value Grands Cru wines in the village, and that is what we will be tasting this evening.

Domaine Maume

Domaine Maume was inherited by Bernard Maume from his uncle, and for many years was his 'other' career - playing second fiddle to his day job as a lecturer specialising in yeasts at Dijon University.

Since the 4.33 ha estate passed to his son Bertrand the wines have continued to improve, and manage to combine traditional Gevrey-Chambertin characteristics with bags of individuality.

The use of new oak has increased since Bernard's day, although is still only 25%. With no filtering and minimal racking, these are wines that speak of terroir, and the Charmes that we are tasting this evening is one such example.

Domaine Armand Rousseau

If Burgundy has a small number of domaines that can be considered 'royalty', then Domaine Armand Rousseau is most certainly one of them. Gevrey-Chambertin's most prestigious producer is the owner of prime plots in many of the grand cru and premier cru vineyards, and their Chambertin, Clos de Bèze, Ruchottes and Clos St Jacques are considered the benchmarks for their respective appellations.

Armand started the domaine back in the 1930s, but today it is his son Charles and grandson Eric that are in charge.

Tonight we have the pleasure of tasting wines from each tier of the Rousseau range - village, Clos St Jacques 1er Cru, Chambertin and Clos de Bèze Grands Crus.