Atlas
FINE WINES

2016 BURGUNDY EN PRIMEUR

A year in which nature takes away with one hand, gives with the other

As we travelled over to Burgundy to taste the 2016 vintage from barrel, we were fully aware that the region had been badly hit by frost early in the year. We knew that losses due to frost were significant with the 2016 vintage allegedly representing around 50% of a 'normal' harvest. That said, given the run of recent low yielding vintages, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recall a 'normal' vintage – a fact stressed by many growers with whom we spoke. Romain Taupenot of Domaine Taupenot-Merme in Morey St. Denis, declared that 'there is no longer an average yield; there is no longer a classical vintage'.

To be clear, spring frosts affect yield, they do not affect quality adversely. Of course, to a grower whose livelihood depends on his production, reduced volumes can lead to financial strain. But in terms of quality, it is more worthwhile to consider the positive impacts of a reduced crop. With the vine's efforts focused on ripening a lower volume of fruit, there is an easy-won ripeness in many frost-affected vintages.

Think of the conditions that dictated the nature of the 1985 vintage. It was undoubtedly a great year for red Burgundy and one which also commenced with a serious frost during which the temperature in Chablis fell as low as -28 degrees Celsius, at which point the concern shifted from nascent buds to the health of the vine itself. The Côte d'Or in 2016 was not troubled as greatly as Chablis in 1985. A major difference between 2016 and 1985 is that the affected vineyards in 1985 were far lower lying, thus those of Villages and AC Bourgogne level, which was not the case in 2016. In what was described by growers as unprecedented, the frosts in 2016 had their most dramatic impact on vineyards higher up the slopes. The losses are therefore notable in many illustrious vineyards, including leading Premier and Grand Cru. The pattern was completely unpredictable and highly unusual; on one hand, a village like Morey St. Denis came through largely unscathed, whereas Chambolle-Musigny endured heavy losses. The explanation lies in the 'combes', the valleys that feed in to the Côte from the top of the slope to the west. Those vineyards on La Combe St. Jacques in Gevrey-Chambertin were hit, while those around Chambolle-Musigny's La Combe d'Orveaux were devastated. The latter, which is the name of a vineyard that straddles both Premier Cru and Villages appellations, is a notably cool site that leads into the Grand Cru of Musigny itself.

The frost was not the only issue that growers had to contend with. The warm winter coupled with high rainfall that was present until July created conditions that were suited to fungal disease, namely the twin threats of downy mildew and powdery mildew. The growers we spoke to commented that frequent treatments were needed to ensure they held onto the small crop that the vines were able to produce after spring frost. As one particular grower bemoaned, it was not a year to be biodynamic

or organic and given the hand that nature had dealt, it is easy to understand his viewpoint. Once again it was a year where constant vigilance was required in the vineyard.

Thereafter fortunes changed; the summer turned dry and fairly hot, with timely rains in August to pep up the vines, before September provided ideal conditions for full ripeness to be achieved. Indeed, the grapes ripened quickly, the Pinot Noir rapidly accumulating sugar and promoting very impressive ripeness of tannins. The speed of ripening reflects both the heat of the summer but also the fact that the vine had a smaller crop to deliver.

The complexities of the vintage had not ended. Growers had a multitude of decisions to make on the back of the small harvest in their worst hit vineyards. Véronique Drouhin told us that they had lost 90% of their Echézeaux crop, while the yield from the Montrachet under the Marquis de Laguiche holding was down by 50% percent on expectation. Some growers opted to declassify wines so that they could work with a more meaningful volume of wine; Christophe Perrot blending the one barrel of Chambolle 1er Cru he did manage to produce with his villages Chambolle. Others had to consider the use of new oak, as when you only have produced one barrique, how can you avoid using 100% new oak or do you opt to use old oak entirely? Equally, given the losses, how many producers were keen to apply their usual strict selection to the fruit that they could harvest? These are all challenges in their own way and added a significant degree of complexity to the winemaking aspects as much as to the commercial decisions.

And what of the results? Well, the Pinot Noir that we tasted up and down the Côte d'Or showed good richness, a marked juiciness with a fresh, balancing acidity. The wines show fine aromatics, but it is the juicy, accessible nature of this vintage that really hooks you. Looking for vintage comparisons is often a completely pointless exercise. The idea that this vintage is better than 2014 and not as good as 2015 is a gross simplification, even if it neatly dispenses with the complexity of Burgundy, but crucially it is also misleading.

It is worth considering the nature of the preceding two vintages to be able to place 2016 in context. Firstly, 2014's star is in the ascendant; the assessment of the quality of this vintage for reds is changing as the wines show more of their fruit overlaying their linear personalities. It was always considered a hugely successful vintage for whites and certainly one of the finest of the last decade. 2015 is a generous vintage; it shows an uncommon richness in many instances. It is a far bolder vintage, veering towards the exotic end of the spectrum for both whites and reds. The best reds show terrific, well-poised ripeness and finesse; while perhaps not destined to be long distance runners, the best whites reveal generous mouth-filling fruit, attractive intensity and a freshening note of acidity. To be frank, some 2014 reds look set to surpass the heights of the 2015 vintage. And I would wager that in certain instances 2016 will exceed wines from either vintage. This is, after all, the key to our ongoing fascination with Burgundy.

2016 is an enticing vintage. There is an added degree of intensity to the majority of the red 2016s without any loss of classicism. This vintage was a joy to taste from barrel, with vineyard character traits coming through relatively clearly even at this nascent stage. In short there is so much to like about 2016. There is a suggestion of accessibility, a more-ish quality, which the French call 'gourmand', to convey the taster's wish to taste again and again. They have a little more concentration than might be expected and yet still run on classic lines with bright acidities and fine-grained tannins. The whites remind me of 2014's verve, tension and precision, though undoubtedly they will develop a little sooner than such a classic year. They show fine intensity, with bright, fresh citrus fruit; certainly more citrus than the tropical stone-fruit characters that were evident in 2015. Furthermore, they are true to their origins; comparing Darviot-Perrin's Meursault Genevrières to their Perrières was a fascinating exercise with the stonier, mineral tautness of Genevrières showing in stark contrast to the bolder, more broad-shouldered intensity of Perrières.

I should add that we are fortunate enough to work with a very strong portfolio of growers, who are incredibly attentive and exacting in the standards in both the vineyard and the cellar. Results will no doubt differ across the region on account of the unusual pressures felt by growers. We fully expect this vintage to easily find a market and we can perceive a clamour for the wines; that clamour will be exacerbated by the lack of volume. In this vintage, it really does seem that what nature has taken away with one hand, fortunately it has given with the other.

Simon Larkin MW
Managing Director of Atlas Fine Wines

FEATURED PRODUCERS

We regret that, just like all fine wine merchants, we are unable to sell leading Grand Cru and Premier Cru or wines from particularly sought after domaines in isolation – we cannot buy them from the domaines that way ourselves and we are aware that demand is sure to outstrip supply. Instead of running a complex system of allocations, we aim to confirm requests shortly after they are made or highlight where we are unable to assist or where a balance might be required to secure a particularly desirable wine.

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DOMAINE FRANCOIS BERTHEAU

With such a strong focus in Chambolle, Francois Bertheau has been dramatically impacted by the frosts of 2016. What Francois has produced does however reaffirm our view of last year that his wines are all about understated refinement and finesse.

As in all great domaines, the success is founded on lots of hard work in the vineyard. After the grapes are picked, Francois is very hands off. He does not rack the wines very often and uses a limited amount of new oak. The Bertheau wines develop slowly in the barrel, fulfilling the promise of all the good work in the vineyard and reflecting the success of Francois' sympathetic approach. Like all the best winemakers, Francois does not imprint himself too much on the wines, simply making the right decisions at the right times.

The result is a set of wines which exemplify the character of Chambolle-Musigny. Pristine, pure fruit, stunning aromatics and delicate textures highlighted by clean, fresh acidity which gives the wines presence and length. Sublime but never showy.

The holdings at Bertheau are enviable – including Premier Cru Amoureuses and Grand Cru Bonnes Mares – but the quality is clear across the range; these wines perfectly capture the essence of each site from Chambolle villages to Bonnes Mares.

Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru | £360 per six bottle case in bond

An elegant core of floral fruit on the nose. The palate opens with a creamy touch and then subtly coats with sweet cherry depth of fruit. A finely-tuned mineral persistence carries this red fruit to the end. Drink 2019-2025

Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru, Les Charmes 2016 | £475 per six bottle case in bond

Here again the fruit expression is decidedly natural with an elegance to the core of red fruit. There is more mineral power and drive, as would be expected and the strong limestone vein courses on a long mineral finish. Drink 2019-2026

Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru, Les Amoureuses | £1,250 per six bottle case in bond

The fruit style here is creamier and markedly deeper, with greater complexity and potential. Beautifully balanced, there is a happy dialogue between fruit and mineral notes on the finish. Such fluidity and grace. Drink 2020-2026

Bonnes Mares Grand Cru | £1,350 per six bottle case in bond

A lifted yet powerful raspberry, cherry and loganberry nose, scented and pure. Here again the flowing natural style of Francois Bertheau is to the fore. On the finish, the Grand Cru credentials assert themselves in a firm mineral power. Drink 2020-2030

DOMAINE SYLVAIN CATHIARD

Sylvain Cathiard elevated this domaine to one of the most sought-out names in Burgundy. His son Sébastien is now very much in charge and has evolved the luxuriant style to one that adds an increasing purity and precision of vineyard expression. The quality is always evident from barrel at this address, but the 2016s showed astonishing definition and terroir integrity. It is a rare pleasure to find wines that are decadent, luxurious and intensely pleasurable, yet also transparently represent their respective vineyard sites. The Cathiard 2016s are pristine, precise and perfectly delineated.

The Cathiard estate is roughly four hectares in size, with excellent parcels of Villages and Premier Crus in Vosne-Romanée as well as Nuits-Saint Georges. The domaine boasts almost a full hectare of vines in Aux Malconsorts which is considered to be of Grand Cru quality by many commentators. It is the inherent quality of fruit that shines through in the wines of this estate, something that can be attributed to very careful sorting and minimal intervention in the cellar. Tasting these wines is always a joy; they are invariably expressive from barrel yet they also have the backbone and power to age gracefully over time.

Coteaux Bourguignons | £95 per six bottle case in bond

From vineyards around Vosne-Romanée and Nuits-St Georges this is a new wine in Sebastien Cathiard's line up. A blend of Gamay and Pinot Noir that gives a wine of wonderfully crunchy, pippy fruit of freshness and vibrancy. Very mouth-watering and moreish. Drink 2019-2022

Bourgogne Rouge | £140 per six bottle case in bond

The trademark silky fruit style is immediately evident here with blue and red berry fruit on show. A crisp, fresh palate with the lift and vibrancy of freshly crushed fruit. Good texture and gentle grip. Drink 2019-2023

Vosne-Romanée | £290 per six bottle case in bond

Scented dark blue and black fruit on the nose lead into a cushioned palate of gently expressed fruit. Restrained and pure, there is a lovely sense of energy here. Drink 2019-2026

Nuits-St Georges 1er Cru, Aux Thorey | £520 per six bottle case in bond

In its tenth vintage for Cathiard, this Thorey is really on song, with fully ripe fruit from 64-year-old vines. There is a remarkable poise and tension through the palate here with a fine balance of dark berry fruit and mineral precision to the finish. Drink 2019-2028

Nuits-St Georges 1er Cru, Aux Murgers | £570 per six bottle case in bond

Cathiard's Murgers expresses itself forcefully with beautiful ripeness and breadth. The dark berry fruit core seems cocoa-dusted and intense, giving a long palate of powerful, mouth-filling fruit and irony persistence. Drink 2020-2028

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, Aux Reignots | £610 per six bottle case in bond

There is a floral cherry touch here with bluer fruit emerging on a gracefully scented nose. The palate shows a lightness of touch, a restraint and linear precision that allow the limestone mineral core to express itself. This is mesmerising for the taut athletic nature of its structure and the delicate floral lift on the long finish. Drink 2020-2030

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, En Orveaux | £610 per six bottle case in bond

A richly perfumed nose of deep fruit concentration leads in to a palate of juicy blue and black berry fruit. The mineral core here is incredibly intense with a stony power. This powerful skeleton remains surrounded by ripe, pure concentrated juicy dark berry fruit of great persistence. An outstanding Orveaux. Drink 2020-2035

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, Les Suchots | £720 per six bottle case in bond

There is an underlying power and richness to Cathiard's Suchots. A deep core of fresh ripe fruit shows on nose and palate here, with great concentration and finessed, silky tannins. While there is power and some opulence, this is profoundly mineral as well as showing the juicy fresh quality of the vintage. A benchmark Suchots offering excellent cellar potential. 2020-2035

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts | £1,100 per six bottle case in bond

The Malconsorts fruit depth and texture are immediately evident. The palate opens with sweet, ripe, dark berry fruit that is both rich and textured. While there is a clear mineral core running through the palate there is a sense of a greater fruit depth here. The finish is laden with silky dark fruit and gently expressed power. Drink 2020-2035

Romanee-St Vivant Grand Cru | £1,350 per three bottle case in bond

Expressive and pure fruited. Clean, vibrant and full of energy. Even from the Malconsorts this is a step up in class with its dynamic sense of energy and its grippy persistence. There is such incredible length here with juicy fruit lingering, pure and refreshing underpinned by the mineral elegance. Drink 2020-2035

DOMAINE DARVIOT-PERRIN

Domaine Darviot-Perrin has been dedicated to producing wines of excellent quality since its inception in 1989. Although based in Monthélie in the Côte de Beaune, the majority of their wines are produced from holdings in Meursault, Chassagne-Montrachet and Volnay. Since the very first commercial bottling 25 years ago the Domaine has attracted global acclaim. Today, the property spans 11 hectares and is managed by husband-and-wife team Didier and Geneviève Darviot, now assisted by their daughter Alix. Geneviève's father, Pierre Perrin, passed down his extensive knowledge of winemaking and vineyards to Didier and the Domaine's first vintage was realised through the Darviot-Perrin partnership, a partnership which continues in a different guise to this day. The focus with Domaine Darviot-Perrin is on producing the best possible fruit and minimal intervention in the cellar to create beautifully focused and pure wines. We are pleased to be offering what we consider to be the very best of the Darviot-Perrin portfolio, namely their two exceptional Meursault Premier Cru and the Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru 'Blanchots Dessus' from a prized strip of vineyard close to Le Montrachet itself.

Meursault 1er Cru, Les Genevrières | £465 per six bottle case in bond

A really impressive Genevrières with ripe fruit underscored by a marked stony mineral vein. Taut, energetic, athletic even, with citrus melding with yellow stone fruit. This is a powerful expression with surprising density. A truly classic, linear profile for this vineyard. Drink 2020-2028

Meursault 1er Cru, Les Perrières | £575 per six bottle case in bond

The Perrières boasts such a finely ripe core of fruit, oily citrus, round, intense with a prominent mineral character. Richer, more layered than the linear Genevrières, this balances the weight of fruit with such racy acidity. So harmonious – this is a brilliant vintage for Darviot's Meursault Premier Cru. Drink 2020-2030

Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Blanchots Dessus | £565 per six bottle case in bond

This vineyard often termed 'Les Pieds de Montrachet' reveals its Grand Cru quality in 2016; rich, intense and beautifully delineated. There is such an effortless weight on show, wave on wave of ripe, citrus with a sense of underlying power. This is dense, compact even, broad-shouldered with a complex leesy, mineral overlay. Expressed like a mini-Montrachet in 2016. Drink 2020-2030

JOSEPH DROUHIN

The Drouhin family remain a strong force in Burgundy with their négociant and vineyard business continuing from strength to strength. Brother and sister Philippe and Veronique manage the vineyards and cellar respectively, with their siblings Frédéric and Laurent overseeing the commercial side of the estate. A huge range of wines are made, vinified from fruit that the family buy from across Burgundy, from their own holdings (labelled 'Domaine Drouhin'), and from the esteemed Marquis de Laguiche vineyards which they have farmed for decades. The family show meticulous control in both vineyard and cellar; it is impossible not to admire their careful approach to extraction of both flavour and tannin, as well as their philosophy towards ageing in barrel, where they even oversee the selection of the oak before instructing the cooperage to fashion their barrels. They display a very deft touch in their winemaking that many of their peers could do well to emulate. We are delighted to include the wines in our offer further to our tasting in their cellars in Beaune where we had a scintillating tasting of a broad swathe of their range.

Meursault 1er Cru, Les Charmes | £345 per six bottle case in bond

A scented and elegant wine with the broader richness of Charmes at the fore. The supple, soft-textured attack is pulled together by a pithy, mineral grip on the finish. The purity and harmony are what marks this wine out and suggest that, while it will be approachable relatively early, it will age gracefully too. Drink 2020-2026

Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru, Clos de la Garenne | £330 per six bottle case in bond

White flower together with lime and chalk notes grace the nose. The palate shows lovely concentration and poise, with pristine flavours carried on a precise, limestone-infused length. Lovely harmony and freshness here in a beautifully-crafted Garenne. Drink 2020-2026

Beaune 1er Cru, Clos des Mouches Blanc | £450 per six bottle case in bond

A finely-tuned expression of this benchmark Beaune Blanc. Smoky, mineral aromas on the nose are followed by a leesy, toasted element. Grilled grapefruit and yellow stone fruit explode across the palate underpinned by a racy, lively freshness. A long saline minerality reverberates on a finish of great poise and persistence. Drink 2020-2026

Corton-Charlemagne Propriétés | £610 per six bottle case in bond

An intensely full and mouthfilling Corton-Charlemagne. Notes of yellow plum and greengage combine with a note of citrus oil that 1suggests some later harvest fruit. There is a viscosity here that is matched beautifully by a taut, tangy finish and a fine mineral core. Drink 2021-2030

Montrachet, Marquis de Laguiche | £2,350 per six bottle case in bond

Intense and opulent with staggering clarity. A wine of incredible breadth and refinement, full of yellow stone fruit, ripe peach and citrus pith. The stony minerality is allied to a viscosity. There is a gradual building of complexity on a finish if intensity and incredible persistence. Drink 2021-2030

Beaune 1er Cru, Clos des Mouches Rouge | £375 per six bottle case in bond
This Clos des Mouches is notable for its wonderful harmony and balance. Clean, pure, cherry and raspberry fruit on the nose lead into a palate that shows a juicy fruit length , not without mineral energy. This Clos des Mouches is sleeker and more fragrant than initially expected with tannins that are round, fine and nicely integrated into the wine as a whole. There is a lightness of touch and a mineral tautness that carries the wine to a finish. Drink 2020-2030

Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru | £360 per six bottle case in bond
A scented nose with pure and ripe dark berry fruit. The style here is all flowing fruit on an elegant, refined palate that does not lack intensity. The tannins here are sleek and fine-tuned, contributing to the silky texture and an sense of balance that will make this accessible early but ensure a graceful evolution. Drink 2020-2029

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, Les Petits Monts | £990 per six bottle case in bond

Scented, expressive and very sleek. Attractive, deep, dark fruits and the spice of Vosne are unmissable here. Deep dark fruit and a sensuous, flowing nature. This tastes like a Grand Cru; there is poise, volume and an almost seamless texture. Very impressive. Very fine. Drink 2022-2032

Griotte-Chambertin Grand Cru | £1,650 per six bottle case in bond

There is a vibrant yet wild element to the nose, with ripe, dark cherry fruit. The deep fruit core is of incredible purity, manifesting itself in a flowing palate of great finesse. There is a juicy, succulent nature to the finish, which is both long and focused. A beautiful Griotte, marrying purity, power and poise. Drink 2022-2035

Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru 2016 | £990 per six bottle case in bond

A scented nose of cassis and blackberry, there is incredible depth of flavour here. It gently builds in terms of structure; the soft-textured, sweet core gives way to a refined grip on the finish. Drink 2022-2035

DOMAINE HUDELOT-NOELLAT

Hudelot-Noellat is an estate with a great history and truly stunning holdings. This is one of the rare estates, along with Leroy and Domaine Romanée Conti, to own Richebourg and Romanée-Saint-Vivant. In each of the many revered sites, Hudelot have a great parcel. This already excellent estate was elevated to a new level with the arrival of Charles Van Canneyt, who succeeded his grandfather, Alain Hudelot, in 2008. Charles has not sought to reinvent the wheel but rather has fine-tuned every aspect of this top domaine. The influence is especially apparent at the village and lower Premier Cru level where Hudelot was traditionally a little weak, the big change at these levels is reduced yields. Charles' meticulous nature has had an impact across every aspect of the vineyard work and winemaking… this is now one very tight ship. The quality of Charles work is reflected in a run of strong vintages and this estate is now high on collector hit lists. For Charles, what makes the 2016s so appealing and collectible is the combination of suppleness and fruit sweetness; they are wines which he stated show excellent potential for keeping because of the combination of beautiful balance and freshness.

Bourgogne Rouge | £ TBC

This is a remarkably appealing, fruit forward Bourgogne made from numerous parcels outside Chambolle-Musigny. Bright, vibrant with a pleasing depth to the fruit. A smart buy in this vintage. Drink 2019-2025

Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru, Les Charmes | £ TBC

The 2016 Charmes reveals a deep, savoury nuanced fruit. There is plenty of substance to the 2016, yet it is the supple edge which highlights the virtues of the vintage. While there is an underlying juicy, succulent nature to fruit, it seems that this Charmes is going to take a little time to fully knit, though all the components are in place. Drink 2024-2035

Nuits-St Georges 1er Cru, Les Murgers | £ TBC

Murgers so often captures characters more akin to Vosne; here it is no exception. Hints of bright red fruit, with Asian spice overlay blueberry and blackberry in this impressive Nuits. Taut and energetic, this is a terrific Murgers with plenty of richness, but fine delineation and silky fine tannins. Impressive. Drink 2025-2036

Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru | £ TBC

An inviting set of aromatics here; notes of juicy, scented dark red fruit with discreet notes of menthol and spice. There is a generosity to the 2016 with a distinct creamy textural quality and a broad swathe of fruit, yet it doesn't lose its sense of precision and poise. An attractive Vougeot with plenty of potential. Drink 2026-2038

DOMAINE PATRICK JAVILLIER

A visit to the Javillier family is always both a pleasure and a great learning experience with great insight from either Patrick himself or his daughter Marion. Marion now takes the lead in running the estate with her husband, Pierre Emmanuel. The vineyards originally comprised just three hectares, of which two were village Meursault and the third of which was given over to the Aligoté variety. There are now ten hectares which extend over 14 separate appellations. The heart of Domaine Javillier will always be in Meursault, as the Domaine has six different plots of Village-level vineyard. Each parcel is vinified separately and then aged in barrel as appropriate before assembling the final blend or cuvée. The result is impeccable quality with modest pricing given that his vineyards and wines are rated so highly.

While the wines from this address have always been a joy to drink, there seems to be a subtle raising of the quality bar and most importantly an increasing consistency of very high quality. In this respect we were truly taken aback by the wines of the 2016 vintage from this wonderful domaine.

Bourgogne Blanc, Cuvée Oligocène | £195 per twelve bottle case in bond

The Bourgogne Blanc label does this wine no favours, as it impresses over and above many Meursault. This is round, juicy and shows admirable concentration, with a stony, flinty quality. The fruit offers notes of mouth-watering grapefruit and finely ripe citrus. A smart buy in 2016. Drink 2018-2021

Meursault, Les Tillets | £350 per six bottle case in bond

The Tillets has excelled in 2016, exuding stony, mineral, citrus oil notes with a racy, clean cut character. There is a fine sense of energy with layered fruit beautifully offset by the inherent raciness. A wine of fine clarity and purity. A joy to taste even at this early stage. Drink 2018-2024

Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru | £510 per six bottle case in bond

The intensity of a majestic Grand Cru is evident here; bold, intense, broad-shouldered yet underscored by a mineral-infused acidity. The mineral characters are really pronounced on the finish of this tightly-focused Corton-Charlemagne. A wine of power and precision. Very impressive. Drink 2020-2028

DOMAINE DES LAMBRAYS

Domaine des Lambrays is an estate which we have long followed. More recently it has been in the news after its purchase by LVMH. Winemaker of over thirty years, Thierry Brouin, continues at the helm. It will, however, be interesting to see how the wines develop as further investment from LVMH is provided but having produced outstanding wines in 2014 and 2015, the 2016 has continued an apparently upward trend. The domaine has crafted a sublime Clos des Lambrays in 2016.

Clos des Lambrays | £ TBC

This Clos des Lambrays is immediately striking for its purity, its perfume, its sweet fruit and its incredible definition. While there is an increasing amount of talk of stem use in Burgundy, this shows true mastery of an otherwise too often misapplied technique. The glorious sweet, ripe fruit caresses the palate, with incredibly fine tannins further contributing to the lustrous, silky texture. The delineation, focus and direction are remarkable. A fantastic Clos des Lambrays. Drink 2025-2038

DOMAINE HUBERT LAMY

It may be starting to sound like a stuck record, but Olivier Lamy is one of the most talented winemakers in the whole of Burgundy. While this is widely acknowledged, his 2016s make it worth repeating. Once again, he has used no new oak, he expands his use of larger barrels and uses no sulphur for the first twelve months of the wines' life. Olivier is a winemaker that inspires huge confidence; he adapts to the vintage and has a profound understanding of the essence and condition of each vineyard.

Vineyards have been in the family since the 17th century. Olivier joined his father Hubert formally at the domaine in 1995 but had been firmly in command for some years before and he now controls 17 hectares of vineyard over 18 appellations. His wines are often the finest of the entire Saint Aubin appellation and are principally from Premier Cru vineyards with at least 75% being white. Olivier is a thoughtful, intelligent winemaker who has driven the quality of his white wines to very high levels indeed.

Saint Aubin 1er Cru, Clos du Meix | £150 per six bottle case in bond

As always, there is a gentle amplitude to the Clos de Meix, with apple notes vying with peach. The palate is supple yet possessed of a lovely citrus zip. This is clean-cut and juicy, showing good purity and freshness. Good from bottling but with vibrancy to age three to five years or more. Drink 2019-2023

Saint Aubin 1er Cru, Clos de la Chatenière | £190 per six bottle case in bond

Grilled citrus and baked nectarine notes with a subtle creamy touch express themselves on the nose here. The palate is clean and fresh with a juicy, grilled grapefruit length typical of this vineyard. A subtle minerality emerges on the finish. This is a beautiful mouth-watering wine of freshness and some finesse. Drink 2019-2025

Saint Aubin 1er Cru, En Remilly | £190 per six bottle case in bond

The En Remilly really highlights Olivier Lamy's gradual shift of focus over the years to expressing texture more than fruit. While this shows pure, focused yellow fruit notes on the nose, with yellow plum succulence and juicy grapefruit breadth on the mid-palate, it is for its layered, textural, mineral finish that this wine stands out. A fabulous En Remilly. Drink 2019-2027

DOMAINE LATOUR-GIRAUD

Establishing new, direct relationships is possibly one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of what we do at Atlas; that feeling is intensified when the estate in question is a Burgundian domaine that we have been tracking for several vintages. We were overjoyed to get a late allocation of 2015s last year and yet more so to find ourselves continuing now with the 2016s. Domaine Latour-Giraud remains curiously under-the-radar. At least for now.

The Domaine is managed by Jean-Pierre Latour, who first came to run the family-business in the 1990s. Through a meticulous programme of cutting yields and by developing careful non-interventionist practices, quality at the estate has skyrocketed. Jean-Pierre creates powerful, complex and yet balanced and refined white Burgundy. He ferments free-run juice with wild yeasts, ages the Premier Cru partially in new barrels and ensures the maximum possible contact with lees. Fastidious attention in the cellars means that individual cru will be bottled when they are ready – this can vary greatly from site-to-site and vintage-to-vintage.

Having now tasted at the domaine a number of times, we have a great sense of elegant wines made with care and attention. They have all the typicity of great Meursault, displaying structure and concentration of fruit with effortless ease, but without the try-hard, flashier feel of some producers that might court praise.

Bourgogne Chardonnay | £170 per twelve bottle case in bond

Juicy, sweet fruit nose and palate of peach, pear and apple. The finish has a gentle grip, pulling together the supple, appealing palate with a fresh grapefruit-suffused length. Drink 2018-2021

Meursault, Les Narvaux | £210 per six bottle case in bond

The nose here shows leesy, smoky bacon aromas so typical of young Meursault but which give way to a delicate lime and white flower palate. This is delicate in its texture and elegant in its structure. The fruit is clean, fresh and vibrant and supported by a silky texture and a lovely salty tang at the end. Drink 2018-2024

Meursault 1er Cru, Les Charmes | £310 per six bottle case in bond

Lovely mid-palate volume of ripe, pure fruit. Pulls to a taut ending. Great focus and precision. Textured. Juicy freshness combined with subtle yet powerful mineral expression. Drink 2020-2027

Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru, Les Champs Canet | £320 per six bottle case in bond

Immediately more green-tinged hue. Piercingly pure lime and white flower nose. Roundness of attack and lovely mineral focus. Drink 2020-2027

Meursault 1er Cru, Les Genevrières, Cuvée de Pierre | £380 per six bottle case in bond

Flint and bacon notes on nose. Again, it is the texture that defines the wine. Stony mineral drive with lacey, lemony tang. Elegant and fresh yet not without power. Drink 2020-2030

Volnay 1er Cru, Clos des Chênes | £270 per six bottle case in bond

Perfumed, violet-scented nose with a deeply concentrated raspberry and loganberry fruit. This deep fruit core come through to the palate, where it also retains the floral elegance. Fresh, mouth-watering and with a lovely natural style, this is carefully expressed Volnay, allowing all the elegance of the commune to come through on a long finish of summer fruit freshness underscored by gently expressed, fine-grained tannins. A steal. Drink 2020-2030

DOMAINE LÉCHENEAUT

A visit to Domaine Lécheneaut is always insightful; brothers Vincent and Philippe Lécheneaut are renowned for their knowledge and skill in managing their vineyards. With the well-publicised complexities thrown up by the unusual 2016 growing season, this was more essential than ever.

The domaine itself is situated in Nuits-Saint-Georges, but extends over 10 hectares of vines across 18 different appellations with some considerable holdings in Premier Cru vineyards, including Les Pruliers and Les Damodes. Fernand Lécheneaut worked for a négociant house and sold fruit from his own three hectares, purchased in the 1960s. Over the subsequent years, the family added to their holdings. It was Fernand's sons, Vincent and Philippe, who then set themselves up as a fully-fledged domaine in the 1980s. Given glowing reviews, significant holdings and evident winemaking talent, it is surprising that this domaine has remained off the radar for so long. The brothers have accomplished much in the last 30 years and are subsequently very highly-regarded by fellow growers. It was, in fact, a personal recommendation from one such grower that led to our initial interest. The philosophy here includes organic and biodynamic principles which often underline the focus and attentiveness of a grower. The quality of the fruit is key to their success and each vintage we have assessed has demonstrated stunning purity. These are deceptively long-lived wines; while it is the fruit expression that comes to the fore, there is an underlying structure of great presence. High class Burgundy, indeed.

Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits | £180 per twelve bottle case in bond

Lovely purity and drinkability here. Crunchy berry fruit, fresh and moreish. The fruit is healthy and ripe and there is a wonderful balance and harmony to the gently expressed, early drinking style. Drink 2018-2020

Gevrey-Chambertin | £180 per six bottle case in bond

Though currently quite tight, there is an underlying purity of fruit here. There is also an evident balance of fruit, acidity and tannin that only serves to underline Vincent and Philippe's meticulous vineyard work throughout the growing season. Drink 2020-2027

Morey-St Denis | £180 per six bottle case in bond

Scented blue fruit on the nose leads into a palate of flowing freshness with succulent, juicy, fresh blue and red berry fruit. The delicate, lacy texture carries the pure blue fruit and yet again yields a benchmark Morey villages from the Lecheneaut brothers. Drink 2019-2026

Chambolle-Musigny | £180 per six bottle case in bond

Vibrant with floral cherry aromatics and a fragrance typical of the best wines of Chambolle. There is an increased intensity in the 2016, which benefits from the inclusion of what Chambolle Premier Cru the Lecheneauts were able to produce. The red and black cherry fruit palate is supported by tannins of great finesse. This Chambolle is all about accessible, fragrant fruit and gently-expressed mineral direction. Drink 2019-2026

Nuits-Saint-Georges, Les Chouillets, Vieilles Vignes | £190 per six bottle case in bond

Old vine concentration of pure red cherry fruit on the nose leads to a palate that is juicy and shows a wonderful fruit stone quality. The palate is multi-layered and the tannins are fine giving a beautifully textured length of purity, freshness and balance. Drink 2020-2028

Nuits-Saint-Georges, 1er Cru, Les Damodes | £310 per six bottle case in bond

This Damodes shows a beautiful interplay of red and blue fruit with a touch of spice. There is a silkiness here, not unexpected given Damodes proximity to Vosne-Romanée. Damodes is also one of the higher altitude climats of Nuits St Georges and the freshness and minerality that this engenders come through clearly in this wonderful expression with all its fruit purity and Vosne freshness. Drink 2020-2030

Nuits-Saint-Georges, 1er Cru, Les Pruliers | £310 per six bottle case in bond

A beautifully pure, spicy nose is followed by a clean, delineated, precise palate. Long flowing fruit gives way to a mineral core that drives through to the end of the palate, where it then leaves a sweet, pure fresh fruit on the finish. There is remarkable mineral complexity here in an exemplary Pruliers from Vincent and Philippe Lecheneaut. Drink 2020-2030

Clos de la Roche Grand Cru | £810 per six bottle case in bond

With 40% of the crop lost in Clos de la Roche, the Lecheneauts only produced two barrels in 2016. But what they have produced is a wine with an incredible core of ripe, fresh, mouth-filling fruit. This is complex, spicy, mineral, long and fine. The finish shows a fruit opulence and tannins of irony power. Drink 2022-2032

MÉO-CAMUZET

A welcome and relatively recent addition to our Burgundian portfolio, Domaine Méo-Camuzet is based in Vosne-Romanée although – due to some clever work by the original founder, Etienne Camuzet – it has extensive holdings across the most sought-after parts of the Côte-de-Nuits. The Domaine's profile was elevated in the late 20th century by the involvement of Henri Jayer, who looked after the vines and made the wines for many years. Jean-Nicholas Méo is currently at the helm, making wonderfully elegant, fragrant Pinot Noir. The fruit is farmed organically for the most part, although not dogmatically so, allowing the domaine to treat for mildew and spray to prevent the onset of rot in difficult years. The result is impeccable purity and freshness and the wines certainly earn their place in our Burgundy range.

Vosne-Romanée | £360 per six bottle case in bond

An impressive villages offering – as is always the case here – a violet touch to the aromatics allied to notes of blackberry and black cherry. There is a pleasing ample nature about the 2016, which with its hints of spice and sleek overall impression seems classically Vosne. Far more mineral and intense than many village level Vosne however. Drink 2022-2034

Frère et Soeurs, Chambolle-Musigny | £315 per six bottle case in bond

Revealing a deep fruit with hints of liquorice and menthol, there is sleek, well-pitched dark fruit, currently held in check. It will be interesting to see how this develops, as it doesn't reveal the austerity that can be present in some vintages. Drink 2023- 2035.

Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru, Les Chaumes | £600 per six bottle case in bond

The 2016 Chaumes boasts an impressive set of aromatics, wild hedgerow fruits and hints of exotic spice. There is a sweet, ripe attack with a menthol-like, minty note and an easy appeal to this vibrant Chaumes; it would be easy to underestimate this impressive Vosne 1er Cru as it hinges on its fragrant, elegant fruit and vibrancy. Drink 2022-2034

Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru | £1,200 per six bottle case in bond

Meo's Clos de Vougeot is often one of the more consistent of this large Grand Cru. The 2016 reveals fragrant, perfumed red berry fruit on the nose, with a layered palate of dark fruit, all black cherry and liquorice. Never the most open of Clos de Vougeot at this early stage, but the substance is present as is the mineral reserve. What fascinates with the 2016 is the bright acidity that leads long into the finish. Drink 2025-2038

DOMAINE DENIS MORTET

We have followed the wines of Denis Mortet for a number of years; first, charting Denis' rise to become one of the stars of Burgundy in the 1990s and then, following his very sad death in 2006, watching his son Arnaud establish his own reputation and adapting the house style.

Denis' wines were always powerful and rich with plenty of new oak character, a style which always split the crowd. With age, his wines blossom; the oak is well integrated and the wines offer up great elegance and power. This is a testament to the raw materials, as nobody worked harder than Denis in the vineyard - a tradition which Arnaud has worked resolutely to uphold.

Arnaud honours his father's work but the emphasis in his wines is on elegance over power. Utilising less oak than his father, his wines are still very concentrated and rich, but are also more lively, fresh and energetic. A very exciting domain indeed, it is our view that Arnaud has adopted the very best aspects of his father's approach and built on this great work. This is a high-quality operation and no expense is spared. Arnaud has begun purchasing selectively, in areas that include Bonnes Mares. He has implied this will continue and new holdings will no doubt make a welcomed addition to the traditional Mortet benchmarks of Lavaux St Jacques, Clos Vougeot and Chambertin and further augment the status of this feted domaine.

Fixin Vieilles Vignes | £ TBC

The average vines age here is 50 years, with the wine made from two parcels, one to the north of the appellation providing structure, the other to the south bringing elegance. 50% of the fruit is destemmed, 50% whole bunches. Pure concentrated cassis fruit nose gives way to a flowing palate of good density and structure. Good length of fruit carried by juicy freshness and spicy minerality. Drink 2018-2025

Gevrey-Chambertin, Cinq Terroirs | £ TBC

Perfumed forest fruit on nose comes though on a flowing palate with a beautifully expressed mineral length. There is a pleasingly restrained savoury touch here too which adds complexity to an exemplary blend of the varied terroirs of Gevrey that constitute this vibrant and expressive cuvée. Drink 2018-2026

Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru, Les Champeaux | £ TBC

From four different plots and 70 to 100-year-old vines, Mortet's Champeaux opens with incredibly pure and vibrant dark cherry and raspberry fruit on nose and palate. There is firmness and power here too in a palate of structure and length. Drink 2019-2028

Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru, Lavaux St Jacques | £ TBC

Pure, fresh, ripe forest fruit, beautifully focussed. Everything comes together here in terms of fruit depth and terroir expression. There is an appealing juicy fruit concentration underpinned by a mineral core, which drives the palate. This is so well delineated and precise with a very fine mineral persistence. Drink 2020-2030

DOMAINE TAUPENOT MERME

Romain Taupenot and his sister Virginie make multi-faceted wines with all the hallmarks of great Morey-Saint-Denis and impressive complexity from the outset. Jancis Robinson highlighted with the release of the 2014s that 'they have a determination to make better wine every year' and this situation has continued with another beautiful set of wines in 2016. As we have previously stated, Domaine Taupenot-Merme is increasing its relevance to fine Burgundy buyers year-on-year. They have 13.5 hectares across villages of Chambolle-Musigny, Morey-Saint-Denis, Gevrey-Chambertin and Nuits-St. Georges as well as small parcels on the Côte de Beaune in Corton, St. Romain and Auxey-Duresses, all of which originally came from a different arm of the family.

Romain describes himself as a 'vigneron paresseux' – or a 'lazy vigneron'. A modest and self-deprecating comment perhaps, but it does hint at his policy of minimal intervention in the vineyard and winery. It is clear that Romain believes that great wine is made in the vineyard; his vines are organically cultivated, a particularly challenging approach in 2016. But such respect of the soil and vine does see him expressing the true character of each vineyard with great clarity. The winemaking is unobtrusive; the use of oak is measured to allow Pinot's aromatics to express themselves fully. Despite his insistence on a laid-back approach, he comes across as a grower intent on raising the bar and elevating the quality of his wines as well as the standing of his domaine. More than ever, the wines impress with their expressive aromatics and core of plush, textural fruit.

Chambolle-Musigny | £220 per six bottle case in bond

A restrained, elegant nose of ripe, red fruit with a fragrant floral lift gives way to a flowing palate. There is lovely freshness and vibrancy here and a juicy, perfumed persistence with a subtle mineral touch at the end. Drink 2018-2023

Morey-St Denis 1er Cru, La Riotte | £395 per six bottle case in bond

Beautiful purity of intense blue fruit on the nose here. A flowing attack is laced with mineral notes of limestone and gravel. A sweet fruit touch comes through with a lovely texture and a gentle creaminess. Juicy, blue fruit length. Drink 2020-2028

Nuits-St Georges 1er Cru, Les Pruliers | £395 per six bottle case in bond

Restrained intensity of raspberry and black cherry fruit on a fluid palate of fresh length. There is energy here too keeping this expression of Pruliers poised and fresh. Succulent, moreish palate with a controlled mineral underpinning suggest a wine that, while approachable early, offers significant potential for ageing. Drink 2021- 2030

Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru, Combe d'Orveaux | £465 per six bottle case in bond

Typically understated, this shows well-delineated mineral focus combined with a notably elegant red and black fruit nose with floral touches. A wine all about finesse and elegance. The long finish is remarkable for its focused vibrancy of intense black fruit. Drink 2020-2032

Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru | £735 per six bottle case in bond

A scented, fragrant lifted nose of blueberries and red cherry fruit with a subtle creamy edge. Firm but juicy structure here; both mouth-filling and mouth-watering. Darker berry fruit on a fine, stony, fruit-laden finish. Powerful and long. Drink 2020-2035

Mazoyères-Chambertin Grand Cru | £795 per six bottle case in bond

The nose here is closed and less immediately expressive than the Charmes. But there is a great core of ripe, clean, pure, healthy fruit beneath. There is a voluptuous touch to the palate, too, a luxuriant quality so often found in the Mazoyères-Chambertin. The mineral core, encased by dark fruit, builds on the finish. Drink 2020-2035

We regret that, just like all fine wine merchants, we are unable to sell leading Grand Cru and Premier Cru or wines from particularly sought after domaines in isolation – we cannot buy them from the domaines that way ourselves and we are aware that demand is sure to outstrip supply. Instead of running a complex system of allocations, we aim to confirm requests shortly after they are made or highlight where we are unable to assist or where a balance might be required to secure a particularly desirable wine.