

Burgundy 2014 Vintage Summary

We made our annual trip over to Burgundy in October to wade through hundreds of wines, all in the aim of trying to pick for you the best possible range. Truth be told waking up to taste wine at 6:30am should indicate it's not all fine food and glamour on these trips, it's exhausting, but I wouldn't change this trip for any other, there are so many charming, friendly producers to be seen. As it transpires, this year was one of the easiest trips I've ever undertaken in terms of trying to sort the wheat from the chaff. It really is a question of choosing the best of the best this year. The occasional disappointments of vintages like 2008 or 2011 simply did not seem to exist.

What do you need to know about 2014? Summer was grim – wet, windy and miserable! Very much like our summers here in the UK, but it rather throws a spanner in the works if you're a Vosne producer tending a plot of Echezeaux Grand Cru. But, thanks to a super, sunny September, the vines got all the sun they could need. Very fortunate, but after three years of reduced yields and limited income, the smaller Burgundy producers deserve Mother Nature giving something back.

You'll likely hear about the Suzukii fly. It's the 'in vogue' word in the wine trade when discussing Burgundy 2014. It's the first time vines in Burgundy have been affected by this fruit fly which is a problem only for the red grapes. The results were slightly higher levels of acetic acid in the harvested fruit, but this was largely eradicated by the fermentation process. The more significant impact on the wine was the grapes were harvested a little earlier in most cases meaning a slightly earlier drinking, less tannic style of red Burgundy; perhaps no bad thing for many?

The Whites

The whites are where this vintage really shines, critics are raving about 2014 and many are suggesting it is one of the greatest white vintages ever. Already we're having problems sourcing the volumes we need. The wines can be powerful, concentrated, but balanced by excellent refreshing acidity. They will be lovely to be enjoyed young, however they have all the components to cellar very well. At one end the whites produced by Domaines such as Bernard Moreau and a new addition to our range this year, Domaine Génot-Boulanger are rich and powerful with exotic, ripe fruit flavours. 2014 can also do refined, understated elegance with producers like Domaine Bachelet-Monnot and Château de Puligny. It really is a vintage to stock up on the whites and there is something for everyone in 2014.

*Producers of note: Domaine Bernard Moreau, Domaine Antoine Jobard, Domaine Jean Chartron
Domaine Bachelet-Monnot & Domaine Monnier*

The Reds

While not hitting the structured, cellar-worthy peaks of 2005 or 2010, or the peaks of the 2014 whites many of these 2014s are wonderfully perfumed, refined and incredibly drinkable, there is also surprising consistency. A number of producers were likening them to the 1990s or 2000s which is praise indeed. At the top end, Domaines such as Grivot and Drouhin are producing typically intense reds, while many producers including Bichot, Bertheau and Lignier are offering more perfumed wines relying less on power and structure.

Producers of note:

Dujac, Benjamin Leroux, Domaine Confuron-Gindre, Francois Bertheau, Domaine Grivot & Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

Please note, critics reviews and scores are coming out at a rate of knots, we'll update this document once more of the scores and reviews have been published.

Angus McLean, Fine Wine Manager, 11th January 2016