

The Burgundy Briefing

news, views and tastings

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Issue 5, May/June 2006

Tasting

Chablis mini verticals

These notes were taken in May 2005. I have adapted the drinking times to be relevant now, so that a wine that was drinking well last year might be 'drink up' in the notes now, unless I had noted at the time that it had the capacity to plateau for a while.

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Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin Chablis, Premier Cru Fourchaume

Chablis, Fourchaume, Vieilles Vignes, 2002

This is aged on its gross lees for 12 months. Jean-Claude is looking for "the originality of the lees," and a different way to express the identity of Fourchaume and the typicity of Chablis.

Very pure fruit, floral and intense, but also rich. Sumptuous and seductive palate, which is broad and rounded with lovely depth. Excellent palate coverage. Fine to very fine. From 2008. Score 18

Chablis, Fourchaume Vieilles Vignes

This is a blend of Fourchaume vieilles vignes and Pièce du Comte.

This is showing a little honeyed development on the bouquet with richness and crystallized lemon character. Integrated palate, evolving somewhat more quickly than expected. Slightly one dimensional, but delicious right now and should plateau for the short term (2-3 years). Score 16.5

Chablis, Fourchaume, 2000

Blend of Vieilles Vignes and Pièce du Comte. Jean-Claude remarks that this was "not a good vintage for old vines". He harvested early at 13% potential alcohol, but it was not as ripe as he thought...so he blended the old vines with the Pièce du Comte. He compares it with the 2004.

Pure and crystallised on the bouquet, sumptuous. Rich earthy palate with fair breadth. Rounded body. Balanced, but soft acidity. Very attractive, but a little short. Particularly good, but not fine. Drinking now and should plateau for at least 4 years. Score 17

Chablis, Fourchaume, Vieilles Vignes, 99

Excellent 1999. Tighter and more reserved than 2000. Stony, saline character. Powerful and quite austere, but with ripe fruit. Very compact and dense. From now and for the medium term. Score 18

Stockists

UK: Fields, Morris & Verdin.

USA: Kysela Père & Fils.

Domaine Billaud-Simon Chablis, Grand Cru Vaudésir

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2003

Peachy, not too ripe and very well contained. Attractive salty notes. Rich strike and rounded body. Thickly textured, broad with modest acidity and cheesy characters. Perhaps a little short for grand cru. Drink now. Particularly good. Score 17.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2002

Intense and lifted with notes of apricot and stone. Sweet and rich first impression. Creamy texture with a slightly buttery character, but tight enough. It is very even and harmonious; concentrated, long and juicy with mineral and caramel on the finish. From 2007. Score 18

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2001

Showing some secondary characters. Biscuity, but also floral. This is intense, rather energetic and refined with a good strike. Spicy minerality and firm acidity in the middle palate and a decent, savoury finish. Drinking now and onwards for the medium term. Score 17.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2000

Showing clear evolution with a hint of camembert on the palate. Slight truffley notes on the bouquet. Rich mushroomy attack. It is a little hollow in the middle palate and leaner than the 2001. There is sufficient acidity and a decent toasty finish. Very to particularly good. Drink now and should plateau for the short term. Score 17

Chablis, Vaudésir, 1999

Nutty, intense and marmitey. Definitely ready with oyster-shell characters combined with mushroom. It is well balanced with a reasonable enough follow through, but it seems slightly fragile. Drink up. Score 16.5

Stockists

UK: H & H Bancroft; Bentalls of Kingston; Berry Bros and Rudd; Ian G. Howe; Longford Wines; Montrachet; Freddy Price; Selfridges; Charles Taylor Wines; Wine Trading Co; The Wine Society; Noel Young Wines.

USA: Garnet Wines and Liquors; Hi-Time Wine Cellars; Langdon Shiverick Inc.

Domaine Christophe & Fils Chablis, Vieilles Vignes

Chablis, Vieilles Vignes, 2003

Rich, nutty, but contained. Really attractive and very fresh. Good attack and open on the palate. Quite broad with moderate density and good balance. Flavours are nutty, ripe and evolving. Perhaps a touch grilled on the finish. Sound. Drink up. Score 13

Chablis, Vieilles Vignes, 2002

Vivacious, expressive and floral with a touch of honey. Lovely silky palate, fine fruit, clear and vibrant and a long and racy finish. Very fine village wine. Drink now. Score 14.5

Chablis, Vieilles Vignes, 2001

Lime and honey and very attractive now. Palate surprisingly fresh and focused showing attractive toasty and marmitey notes. Drink up. Score 14

Chablis, Vieilles Vignes, 2000

Sébastien Christophe just couldn't suppress his pride when he opened this. This was his first label. Lovely clarity, very classic and pure with a remarkably youthful aroma. Notes of almond kernel and brioche. Taut compact palate, with racy acidity, nervy and mineral with a chalky finish. Very fine for village Chablis. Drink now but may continue to develop. Score 15

Stockists

UK: AB Vintners.

Domaine Jean Collet & Fils, Premier Cru Montée de Tonnerre

Domaine Jean Collet uses large oak foudres, but also some barriques. However for Montée de Tonnerre only stainless steel is used.

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2003

Quite cheesy already and unctuous. Viscous palate with slightly roasted notes of a very warm vintage. Rather short. Score 14

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2002

Much fresher and more lifted aroma; very pleasantly honeyed. On the palate macademia nuts and a memory of marmite on toast. It's just beginning to develop. Decent balance with slightly steely acidity and still plenty of pure fruit. Moderate finish. All credit to Collet's careful selection at harvest for despite the incidence of grey rot this wine is holding up well. Now and for the short term. Score 16.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2001

Nutty and rich, honeyed orange and definite saline character. Surprising grit and a very even palate with a steely, oyster-like character. Lots of energy, decently complex and quite a powerful finish. I like this. Now and for 2-3 years. Score 17

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2000

Moving onto tertiary characters of mushroom and woodland with the 2000. However the palate is a little fatigued and a touch hollow on fruit, although the acidity is fair and the finish reasonable. A little disappointing. Bouquet more satisfying than the palate. Drink up. Score 15.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 1999

Tertiary aromas and a slightly flat palate, lacking energy. Toast and marmite flavours, but flat and falls off a bit on the finish. (May have been a cork problem here, no TCA, but slightly oxidative).

Stockists

UK: Heath Street Wine Co.; Ian G. Howe; Laytons; Le Picoleur; La Réserve; Le Sac à Vin.

USA: Robert Chadderdon Selections; Garnet Wines & Liquors.

Domaine Du Colombier Chablis, Grand Cru Bougros

Mothe produces wine with a delicate touch. They are light, but light is a good thing when combined sufficient intensity. He brings out the most interesting characters in Bougros.

Chablis, Bougros, 2003

Surprisingly well balanced and restrained for this vintage. Delicate fruit, a really steely core and excellent balance, although Mothe did adjust the acidity. Perhaps it does drop off a little on the finish. From 2007. Score 16 at most

Chablis, Bougros, 2002

Greater unsprung potential here. Showing slightly nutty, gun smoky notes; just the beginning of development, but still showing primary floral characters. A refined palate, delicate but intense with a firm steely backbone. Linear style which is very pure. A long, if delicate finish. Quite ethereal. Fine to very fine. From 2008. Score 18

Chablis, Bougros, 2001

Much more evolved - full with notes of warm brioche, hazelnuts and honey. Rich, sleek texture with softer acidity, buttery and slightly smoky. No strong mineral notes. Drink up. Score 16

Chablis, Bougros, 2000

Finely tuned bouquet, light, but intense; still a little floral and slightly toasty. This is rather restrained for 2000. There is a touch of candied lemon. Good attack to a very fluid palate, which has a silky texture and firm mineral core. A pure and delicate finish. Lots of finesse. It should be showing very well now. Score 17.5

Stockists

UK: Continental & Overseas Wines; Fields Wine Merchants; Goedhuis & Co.

USA: Vineby Gerard, NY.

Domaine De La Conciergerie

Domaine de la Conciergerie had not organised a flight and sadly Christian Adine was not present to speak about his wine. However the lady who received us kindly pulled a couple of bottles out of a nearby rack to demonstrate how the wine ages.

Petit Chablis, 2003

Floral, biscuity and a touch marmitey. Good minerality on the palate with firm acidity and a decent finish. Surprising grip on mid palate. Good, but drink up. Score 13.5

Chablis, Premier Cru Montmains, 1998

Very attractive bouquet, richly floral and buttery. Soft entry to a fairly rounded palate. Touch of liquorish and fennel, well harmonised and with balancing acidity. Fair finish. Not profound, but a satisfyingly interesting wine to drink now, but drink up. Score 14.5

Stockists

UK: Laytons.

USA: Vigneron Imports.

Daniel Dampt Chablis, Premier Cru Côte De Léchet

Chablis, Côte De Léchet, 2003

"Good control of temperature was so important in 2003. We harvested at night to have fresh grapes." Dampt started on the 25th August to retain natural acidity, (the total acidity was 3.2).

Ripe apple, white peach and touch of honey. Open, rounded palate, but a steely core lies beneath, keeping the structure tight. Surprisingly balanced with a fair and sustained finish. Particularly good, maybe fine. Delicious when tasted last year and should have developed favourably. Score 17

Chablis, Côte De Léchet, 2002

White flowers, touch of honey, very cool and restrained. Glossier than the 2004 and more elegant than the 2003. Slight smoke again, very dignified and balanced combining clarity of terroir with the concentration of the vintage. From 2006/7. Score 17.5

Chablis, Côte De Léchet, 2001

Nutty, honeyed and developed bouquet. "Difficult to vinify, because of the botrytis." Rich and accessible, but still sufficiently fresh. Moderate finish. Drink now and drink up. Score 15.5

Chablis, Côte De Léchet, 2000

Very lifted, feminine and floral, slightly powdery. Subtle, smooth with limey, juicy acidity and a lovely follow through. Saline and pure. It's fine, stylish and complex, but Daniel Dampt does not think it quite as good as his 2002 and I would have to agree, despite its elegance. Drink up. Score 17.5

Chablis, Côte De Fourchaume, 1996

The 1996 Fourchaume remarked Daniel Dampt has aged better than his typical Fourchaume given the particularly high acidity. Glossy bouquet rich with roasted macadamia nuts. On the palate it is rich, dense and complex with a nervy backbone. Excellent verve and harmony and finishes well. This should plateau for a while. Score 17

Stockists

UK: Ballantynes of Cowbridge; Georges Barbier of London; Haynes, Hanson & Clark; Playford Ros Ltd.; Waters of Coventry. The Vine Trail.

USA: T. Edward Wines; Michael Skurnik Wines Inc.; Vinalia

Domaine René & Vincent Dauvissat Chablis, Grand Cru Les Preuses

Chablis, Les Preuses, 2003

Orange blossom and white flowers. Upright and elegant and a touch exotic. A contained profile. Firm underlying minerality and a really excellent finish. From 2007/8. Stunning for the vintage. Score 19.5

Chablis, Les Preuses, 2002

Intense yet standoffish. Wet shell and saline impression. The entry to the palate is also very mineral - focused, refined and composed. This is absolutely stunning wine. It is wonderfully fluid but with a fine taut backbone a long piano wire finish. Grace and finesse. Outstanding. From 2009. Score 20

Chablis, Les Preuses, 2001

Composed aroma with notes of warm brioche and nutty richness. Still a touch floral, but with some honeyed notes. Lower palate than the 2002, not as lifted and sublime and without the finely tuned finesse that Dauvissat can reach. However the finish is very sustained. From 2009. Score 18

Chablis, Les Preuses, 2000

In this vintage Les Preuses is wonderfully perfumed, lifted and just a touch exotic. Orange blossom and notes of gunflint and cashew on the palate. Good attack, tense, racy minerality and very layered. Really good grip, although it takes a while for this to surface and grab you. Again this is very dignified wine, but with a different style of fruit to 2002, not quite as lush. More gravel and aniseed here. The finish is persistent and saline. From 2006/7. Score 19.5

Chablis, Les Preuses, 1999

Developing ripe brie-like notes, unctuous yet reserved. Richness and fluidity with a broader palate, more warmth, yet with a steely minerality at the core and firm grip. Composed with a long complex finish. Drinking now, but will continue to develop. Score 19

Stockists

UK: Domaine Direct; Justerini and Brookes

USA: Vineyard Brands

Domaine Jean-Paul & Benoit Droin Chablis, Premier Cru Montée De Tonnerre

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2003

Slightly honeyed and quite a pronounced saline character. There is minerality here, but less so than the 2004 (See issue 1). The shape is generous, round, but still direct. Surprisingly vibrant, although the focus is not that sharp. Lovely chalky finish and really rather persistent. From 2006/7. Score 17

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2002

There is more fruit character on the 2002 (granny apple) and it is not as obviously mineral on the aroma as 2004. Subtle attack followed by overt oyster and more apparent mineral notes on the palate, although accompanied again by more fruit. Very long and flinty with touch green apple on the finish. Balance and harmony. Delicious. From 2008. Score 18

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2001

Mealy, waxy and honeyed notes on the bouquet. It is quite evolved with Alsatian wine characters. Indulgent and delicious, if not very typical. The palate is more mineral with a dry, chalky character. Gunflint and minerality on the finish. Drinking now. Score 15

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2000

Fragrant, slightly nutty, rather tense and adolescent, but subtle. Slight petrol and hints of aniseed character. (Big yield, like 2004, 2000 90 hl/ha). Lovely pure minerality – lots of terroir character. There is a delicious harmony to this wine. It is fluid with a delicate and flinty character. Droin says wait until 2010. Quiet at the moment on the finish, but it is long. With this Tonnerre, the minerality is very pronounced. Score 18.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 1999

Droin considers he made a mistake in this wine, "my first... too much oak." Of the 30% used, half was new. The aroma is fresh and surprisingly not overpowered by oak. It is nutty and a touch honeyed, but without much intensity; a little feeble. On the palate the oak is more apparent, particularly on the finish. while it is a little hard, it is an interesting wine with some complex characters. Drink up. Score 14.5

Stockists

UK: Berry Bros & Rudd; Bidendum; Domaine Direct; Goedhuis & Co.; Harrods; Ian G. Howe; Raeburn; Richards Walford.

USA: Block Distribution; Direct Import Wines; European Cellars; Grape Expectations, Hi-time Wine Cellars; Roanoke Valley Wine; Santé Wine Distribution; The Henry Wine Group; USA Wine; Western Importers.

**Domaine Joseph Drouhin
Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon ; Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos ;
Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir**

The Drouhin's are substantial landholders in Chablis and work their vineyards organically.

Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon

Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon, 2003

Opulently ripe mango, bready and very seductive. Hedonistic palate with gras. It has a succulent mouthfeel. Top notch village wine for the vintage. Drinking now. Score 15

Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon, 2002

Warm brioche, slightly smoky and buttery, but with more restraint than the 2003. Honeyed and spherical, with some mature nutty notes. Maturing quite quickly. Very good, although perhaps a little dry on the finish. In some ways I prefer the 2003. Drink now. Score 14.5-15

Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon, 2000

Golden aroma, yet citrus too. Slightly saline and more youthful than the 2002. Supple texture, zesty acidity and good minerality with an ample creaminess to the body. Not especially long, but it was very engaging and was drinking well last year. Drink up now. Score 15

Chablis, Domaine De Vaudon, 1999

This has an appealing bouquet in a very developed, toasty way, however the palate is tiring.

Chablis, Les Clos

Chablis, Les Clos, 2003

Intense, luscious and exotic fruit with notes of custard apple. Very rich attack with a warm earthiness on the palate. This embraces the warm vintage. It is ripe and full bodied, very upfront and opulent. A very good 2003. Score 18.5

Chablis, Les Clos, 2002

Very fresh and elegant with a little reserve. Showing good potential for development. Although the oak is apparent, it is in balance with the concentrated fruit. Broad and structured with a glossy texture. Rich and powerful with an intense and prolonged finish. From 2007. Score 19

Chablis, Les Clos, 2000

Maturing with complex notes of ripe brie, ceps and brioche. Layered palate with a firm core, controlled and compact, but not as powerful as 2002. Drinking now. Score 17.5

Chablis, Les Clos, 1999

Apricot and bitter almond with creamy notes. Intense attack to a buttery palate with almond and smoky characters. This shows a good harmony of wood and fruit on the

palate with fair acidity and a stony undercurrent keeping this wine fresh and very interesting as it evolves. Drink now. Score 18

Chablis, Vaudésir

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2002

Rich, citrus and spicy aromas. The oak is neatly integrating. Rounded, overt palate with ripe almost crystallised lemon fruit nicely balanced with fresh acidity. Compact with good depth, a firm texture and a lifting edge of minerality. Very well composed wine. From 2007 and over the following 10 plus years. Score 18.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2001

Warmly maturing bouquet of hay, spices and walnuts. Very attractive indeed. Rich and biscuity palate, with a good sense of minerality giving balance and supporting the acidity. Plenty of low spice on the palate too and the oak has integrated well. The palate is not big, but has an appealing plumpness. The finish is nicely scented. Ready now and drink over the short term. Score 17.5-18

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2000

A ripe glossy aroma, showing development. Walnuts and toast. The palate is full and buttery with secondary notes of fresh hay and cheese. Not as much depth as the 2002, nor as much acidity. It is evolving quite quickly and is lovely and unctuous now and for drinking over the short term. Score 17

Stockists

UK: Contact the agents: Dreyfus Ashby. Ballantynes of Cowbridge; Decorum Vintners; Lea & Sandeman; James Nicholson Wine Merchants; Howard Ripley; Roberson Wine Merchant Ltd; Stones of Belgravia.

USA: Dreyfus Ashby & Co.; Garnet Wines & Liquors; Hi-Time Wine Cellars; Sherry-Lehmann Inc.

Domaine Duplessis, Chablis Premier Cru Vaillons

Chablis, Vaillons 2000

Light elegant aroma, tight with notes of toasted nuts. Marmite-like, intense with a reserved character, linear, but with substance and complexity. Very restrained and reserved style. Biscuity and chalky finish. Ready, but will continue to develop for ten years. Score 18

Stockists

UK: Richards Walford.

Domaine Corinne & Jean-Pierre Grossot Chablis, Premier Cru Mont De Milieu

The Grossot estate lies at the foot of the Mont de Milieu. The style is rather oaky, which doesn't appeal to me, however the quality is good and there is plenty of interest as these wines age. The wood seemed better suited to 2003, 2001 and 1999, than 2000 and 2002. The better vintages take time and seem quite reserved.

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2003

A very obviously oaky aroma and palate. Rich fruit although the steeliness shows clearly through and the profile is tight and linear. This has a taut palate and good balance for the 2003 (Grossot did adjust the acidity). The persistent finish is minerally and marked by oak. From 2006/7. Score 17-17.5

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2002

The oak is settling down here, although it still dominates. Pure lemon fruit is visible beneath it. Good attack. The fruit is more vibrant and pure than the 2003. The profile is linear and steely. It felt rather lean in 2005, but may have round off as it matures. However I do question if this level of extract can handle the oak. Good grip and a sustained finish. From 2008. Score 17

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2001

This is rich and invitingly autumnal with a nutty, slightly smoky bouquet. The wood serves to enhance and emphasise the character of this vintage. It has a lighter palate with less grip than the 2002 and perhaps seems a little slight in comparison, but there is a good, firm nervy backbone, which defines this wine. Slightly drier and shorter on the finish than 2002. It was on a plateau last year. Drink now. Score 16

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2000

This was more evolved in 2005 than expected. Scrumptious nose with complex mushroom notes, toast and liquorish on the bouquet. Firm attack, smoky with a touch of gun-flint, and a racy backbone. It is showing some reserve. Again the wood seems to dry the finish a bit. Now and for the short term. Score 16

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 1999

With the '99 the bouquet of Mont de Milieu moves on to straw, honey and more golden characters. The wood seems to suit this wine well too. Actually I prefer this to the 2000 and 2001. There is a sunniness to the fruit on the palate. Certainly it drops away a bit and perhaps has a little less grip than the 2000, but the overall equilibrium and general harmony is very attractive. The finish is not long, but is sweeter. For now and the short term. Score 17

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 1998

Graduating to the honeyed, savoury brie-like aromatics, but quite light and contained. Very honeyed palate, with a surprisingly compact middle palate and a long complex finish. Rather delicious now and of fine quality for the vintage. Drink up. Score 18

Stockists

UK: Enotria Winecellar; Ian G. Howe; Lay & Wheeler; Liberty Wines (As Domaine Perchaud); O.W. Loeb & Co; La Vigneronne.

USA: Kysela Pere & Fils; World Wine Source.

Domaine Des Malandes Chablis, Grand Cru Vaudésir

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2003

Rich and more exotically floral than the 2004. It is quite broad with biscuit and cashew characters. The middle palate is compact and dense; the acidity modest, perhaps a tad sluggish. The finish punchy but a little short. Fine for the vintage. From 2006/7. Score 18

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2002

This had 24 months elevage before bottling.

Quite baroque with a ripe, brie-like bouquet. Hedonistic palate, spherical with very racy acidity and oyster-shell finish. Quite profound with a powerful finish. Serious wine, although showing earlier development than some. Certainly fine. From 2007. Score: A good 18

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2001

Very floral, lifted, elegant and honeyed. Delicious. A touch smoky and nutty with wonderful verve and acidity. There is a gravelly minerality and a very decent finish. Scrumptious. Drink now. Score 18.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2000 in magnum

Floral, wet stone and a touch of flint and honey. (With time open in bottle, it became more overtly honeyed and toasty). An attractive reserve; very taut and vervy with a fine silky texture and appealing bitter apricot kernel notes. Excellent equilibrium and a firm finish. Now and for the medium term (5-7 years). Score 19

Chablis, Vaudésir, 1999

This has a slightly lighter bouquet - rather more apricot with salted cashew and a little saline. Apricot fruit and kernel characters on the palate with attractive breadth and vervy acidity. Plenty of complexity and a smoky, gunflint finish. Very fine for the vintage. Now and for 5-10 years. Score 19

Stockists

UK Charles Hawkins; Berry Bros & Rudd; Bordeaux Direct; Hall Batson & Co. Howells of Bristol; Longford Wines; Montrachet; The New London Wine Ltd.; Freddy Price; Michael Ruddock Wines; Edward Sheldon; T & W Wines Ltd.; Charles Taylor Wines; Wine Bin Ends Ltd.; The Wine Society.

USA: International Gourmet Corp; Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd.; The Wine Messenger.

Domaine Des Maronniers Chablis

Excellent village wines.

Chablis, 2003

Nutty, cheesy bouquet. Saline and honey on the palate. Refined and mineral, silky textured and stony with toasty flavours and a very decent finish. Complex for a village wine. Ready now. Score a good 15

Chablis, 2002

Very taut and saline, reserved and intense with a touch of oyster shell. Nervy, linear palate with a long fine mineral finish. Just delicious straight, unpretentious village wine. Now and will hold short term. Score 15

Chablis, 2001

Pretty, tight and slightly saline. This is not quite as focussed as the 2004. It is more floral and ageing more quickly, but still has decent minerality and a chalky finish. Good. Now and should hold for a couple of years. Score 14

Chablis, 2000

Oyster shell aroma, still youthfully poised and tense. Mineral attack. Some development on the palate with honey and biscuit characters, but very contained. This is very delicious with an attractive saline finish. Now, but will continue to develop over the next couple of years. Top notch village wine. Score a good 15

Chablis, 1999

Very aniseed and floral on the aroma and seems very fresh (and more lively than the 2003 aroma) despite the age. Very contained. The palate is tight and liquorishy with a slightly drier finish. Drink up. Score 14

Stockists

UK Bibendum; Continental & Overseas Wines; House of Townsend; Ian G. Howe; Great Western; Peter Watts.

USA: Lionstone International.

Domaine Louis Michel, Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir

These wines are matured in steel and need time to express themselves.

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2003

This has a very intense and immediate aroma. Ripe, but also floral and a touch mineral. Tightly controlled and compact, but rounded at the same time. Excellent depth to the middle palate. Lovely long and intense mineral finish. Certainly fine for the vintage. Now and for the medium term. Score 18

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2002

Closed aroma. Not showing much immediately on the palate, but as the wine was aerated the character became apparent. It is very tight with plenty of grip. Very pure with firm acidity; honed and racy. There is excellent extract. It is smoothly stony, cool and dignified; ripe yet elegant. This is quintessentially fine Chablis. Outstanding. You could wait until 2000 and it would continue to evolve for 10 years longer. Score 20

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2001

Lots of work on the triage table this year because of the botrytis. This is much more forward than the 2000. It is very expressive with honey and nuts on the bouquet. The attack is glossy and smooth, but the palate has amazing focus and steely acidity running through the core. Excellent balance and structure. Showing obvious developed characters, but with great poise and potential for some further development. It is very fine for vintage. While it is not as ripe as 2002, or as profound, this allows you to enjoy it earlier. Score 18.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 2000

The bouquet of the 2000 is tighter and more restrained after the 2001, but there are crystalline characters with a hint of smoke and oyster shell. The palate is reserved, refined and racy with an alluring sweet acidity as the core structure. It is cool and refined. It has long term ageing potential. Very fine to outstanding. Score 19.5

Chablis, Vaudésir, 1999

This is lighter and more delicate with saline characters and a hint of forest floor. It has a gentle, subtle and harmonious palate and is very integrated. While it is not as intense on the middle palate as the best wines in this flight, it is refined. From now for the medium term. Score 19

Chablis, Vaudésir, 1998

This is fresher than expected. Light saline, mineral and a hint of mushroom. It is not as rich as the 1999. The palate has a very smooth, wet stone sheen. It is less intense and profound, without the depth and complexity of the bigger vintages. However it is harmonious and well mannered with a delicate finish. Excellent for the vintage. You could certainly drink it now, but make sure you leave some in your glass to aerate. Score 18

Stockists

UK: Berry Bros & Rudd; Corney & Barrow; Dreyfus Ashby & Co. Ltd.; Enotria Wincellars; Findlater Mackie; Fortnum & Mason; Haynes & Clark; Ian G. Howe; O.W. Loeb & Co. Reid Wines; Thresher Group; The Wine Society.

USA: Burgundy Wine Co.; Calvert Woodley; Garnet Wines & Liquors; Vineyard Brands Inc.

Domaine Christian Moreau Père & Fils

Fabien's first vintage was in 2002. Three delicious and serious wines

Chablis, Valmur, 2002

This is aniseed and creamy, slightly spicy with the freshness and lifted character of the vintage. Very good structure here, taut chalky acidity, plumpness in middle, and a fine finish. From 2006/7. Score 18.5

Chablis, Les Clos, 2002

Reserved and refined, showing only slightly developed character. Tight, oyster character, gorgeous fruit, excellent structure with lovely mouth feel and flair. From 2009. Score 19

Chablis, Clos Des Hospices, 2002

Constrained. Slight gun flint. Intense minerality on the attack and finish with very firm grip and with a lovely coating mouth feel. Complex with a fine finish. Very fine. From 2008. Score 18.5

Stockists

UK: Gunson Fine Wines Ltd; Thorman Hunt & Co

USA: Frederick Wildman.

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2003

Stéphane did not adjust the acidity. He comments that after tasting many '89s from all around France, he felt that added acidity in these wines is now bald and out of character with the wine. Added to which, his father did not adjust the must in the warm '76 vintage and the wine, he tells me, is still good. Nutty aroma, slightly mushroomy and delicately golden. Subtle and silky palate with moderate intensity and a fair finish. The terroir helps to boost the impression of acidity. Drink within the next year or two. Score 16

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2002

This has a taut aroma, a touch floral and very fragrant. Lovely texture, very sleek, but with excellent mineral acidity at the core. Oyster shell character on the attack. Racy, pure and poised with an edge of cashew nut showing as this wine develops. Really very persistent with excellent focus. Quintessential Chablis. From 2008 (Stéphane sees a similarity with his father's 1983, but does not think it will last so long, as his father used a lot of SO2 in that wine). Score 18-18.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2001

The rain in August and September and the resulting botrytis reminded Stéphane's father of 1974. However he is now quite pleased with the wine. It is rather opulent, mushroomy but restrained. Candied lemon, fresh and very appealing. Honeyed attack, but with an almost salted cashew nut character. It has good structure with firm acidity. My only criticism is that the palate just drops off a bit quickly. It is drinking well now and should continue on a plateau for another 3 years or so. Score 17.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2000

There is a little new barrique on this wine. Gorgeous, pure and glossy bouquet with orange blossom. It is fragrant and still a bit nervy and youthful. Very silky and saline attack with firm minerality and apricot kernel flavours. It is very poised with excellent texture and purity. Scrumptious. I like this a lot. Leave it for another couple of years and it should have a long life. Score 18.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 1999

Stéphane used battonage in '96, '98 and '99 and decided he didn't like the result and abandoned it. It is very evolved, honeyed and just at the edge of oxidation. He is obviously quite upset with it. The wine is a bit hollow and the bones stick out.

UK The Wine Society, Loeb, Tanners, Lee and Sandeman, Stone, Sun and Vine
US Christopher Cannon

Domaine Pinson Frères Chablis, Premier Cru Mont De Milieu

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2003

They harvested on the 1st September, a later harvest than many.

Very evolved, butterscotch, rich and honeyed with a seductive, creamy palate. It is quite toasty – there is ten percent of new oak, because of the fifty percent smaller harvest. Rich and broad on the finish. Very baroque. Ready now and for medium term. Score 17

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2002

This has come round quite quickly on nose. Showing characters of runny brie, toast and earthy minerality. Good strike and excellent grip. Dense, rich, complex, yet still adolescent. Wonderful stony spine through the wine to a very persistent finish. From 2008. Score 18.5-19

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2001

Lighter and very honeyed with obvious botrytic character. Lifted orange aromas. Dry, chalky palate with marmalade characters. Slight oxidative character. Looking like wine, which is older than it is. Never-the-less it is interesting and has a long and somewhat earthy finish. Drink now and should plateau for the short term. Score 17

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 2000

Gunflint, honey and toast on this powerful bouquet, which is also lively and fresh. Rather more austerity here, massive grip, steely intensity and really firm acidity. Oyster shell and mushroom; grilled nuts and an earthy mineral core. Stunning wine. An architectural wine with a powerful finish needing time to develop. From 2008. Score 19

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 1999

Lighter aromas, grilled nuts, cep and a touch of candied fruit. A very fluid palate; lighter weight admittedly, and with a slightly shorter finish, but never-the-less it has good grip on middle and back palate and fresh acidity at the core. A really interesting wine to drink now. It should continue to evolve in the short term. Score 17.5

Chablis, Mont De Milieu, 1995

Glossy bouquet, roasted nuts and melting cheese; delicious mushroom character and crystallised lemon. Wonderful complexity. Very elegant and fluid with a smoky minerality and smooth stone acidity. This wine has harmonised and settled into its prime, revealing many layers. Delicate but persistent finish. Delicious and should continue to evolve. Score 18.5

Stockists

UK: Bibendum; Europvin; Lea & Sandeman; O.W. Loeb; Majestic Wine Warehouse; Christopher Piper Wines; Tanners; The Wine Society.

USA: Petit Pois Corp; Michael Skurnik Wines Inc.; Wine Warehouse.

Domaine Raveneau Chablis, Premier Cru Montée De Tonnerre

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2003

Very contained for the 2003 with no sign of development and no fatness. A tight and reserved aroma. The palate is rich and plush with a sleek texture and a tight and steely core; marvellously focused. Firm acidity for 2003. Quieter on the finish than Butteaux 2003, but long. Very fine. From 2006/7. Score 18.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2002

Glossy steel to this; elegant, sleek and reserved with a hint of honey, hazelnut and coffee. Very elegant with wonderful sweet acidity. It is superbly linear and direct with a lovely long finish. Great equilibrium, intensity and verve. Energetic and focused and polished. Outstanding premier cru. From 2010. Score 19

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2001

Intense with crystallised fruit and toasted pecan nuts on the bouquet. The strike is glossy; the palate svelte. It's delicious and complex; layered and a little exotic. It is coming forward more quickly layered than is normal for Raveneau. Very fine for the vintage. From 2008. Score 18.5

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 2000

Much more dignified than the 2001. Touch of honey, nut, spice and lemon. It is quiet at the front of the palate, before it broadens out to a much more expressive middle and back palate with notes of steel, oyster and salinity beginning to emerge, especially on the finish. Layered and profound. Outstanding. From 2010. Score 19

Chablis, Montée De Tonnerre, 1999

This has a powerful, velvety and intense bouquet - settling down to a golden, brie-like richness with salted cashews. Seductive attack, which sweeps into a broad, smoky intensity with fresh hay and tight citrus notes behind this. Energetic and dense with a firm backbone and a persistent finish. Excellent for this vintage. Last year it was coming out of its shell. From 2008. Score 18.5

Stockists

UK: John Armit Wines; Haynes, Hanson & Clark; Raeburn

USA: Burgundy Wine Co. Ltd.; Hi-Time Wine Cellars; Kermit Lynch.

Domaine Servin Chablis, Grand Cru Blanchots

Blanchots is made in 100% stainless steel. In 2001 Servin tried ageing this in 6-7 year old wood, but felt that it masked the elegance.

Chablis, Blanchots, 2003

Acidity was added immediately to the must and before cold stabilization. At the moment it looks well done. Quite voluptuous with marmalade characters on the aroma. Not so ripe on the palate. Breadth and richness and decent firmness to the structure. Now or soon. Score 17.5

Chablis, Blanchots, 2002

Half old wood, half stainless steel. A very pure aroma of ripe apple and white flowers. Lovely harmony and elegant fruit. Complex and dense in middle palate with excellent equilibrium and a gentle, but persistent finish. Accessible, but you could leave it for a couple of years. From 2008. Score 18.5

Chablis, Blanchots, 2001

100% old wood. Deeper and richer in colour with tertiary characters on the palate. Evolved candied fruit and toast on the bouquet. Sweet and savoury on the palate. Loosely textured, broad, toasty and nutty. Delicious now and drink up. Score 17

Chablis, Blanchots, 2000

100% stainless steel. A very seductive bouquet, smooth and glassy with wet stone and warm floral characters. It is showing quite some evolution on the palate too – rich and candied, yet with a certain restrained elegance. It will not age as well as the 2002. It does not have quite the same depth and complexity, however it is almost as good. Drinking now, but will certainly continue to develop over the medium to long term. Score 18

Chablis, Blanchots, 1999

100% stainless steel. Limey, candied fruit with slight caramel. More reserved on aroma than the 2000. A savoury sweetness like the 2001, but less so. Glassy, fluid character, but with sufficient acidity to give backbone. Lovely harmony. Possibly fine. Drinking now and on a plateau. Score 18 at most

Chablis, Blanchots, 1989

100% old wood - one and two year old. The bouquet is evolved, yet elegant and restrained. Dense and rich, broad yet compact with complex forest floor characters. It has a steely backbone and a powerful, muscular finish. Surprising. Drink now. 17.5-18

Stockists

UK: Anglo-International Wine Shippers; Avery's of Bristol; Bordeaux Direct; Corney & Barrow; Majestic Wine Warehouse; Peckham & Rye; Roberson.

USA: Julienne wines; Purveyor or Fine Wines.