

The Burgundy Briefing

news, views and tastings

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Tasting

Vertical tasting. **Domaine des Comte Lafon, Désirée; Domaine Carillon, Perrières; Domaine Patrick Javillier, Tête de Murgers**

Domaine des Comte Lafon Vertical of Meursault, Désirée

The days of Désirée are numbered. The 30-40 year old vines will be grubbed up this year. Virus induced low yields of 20-25hl/ha are untenable. 2005 is a fine swansong and an appropriate moment to consider a vertical of vintages.

Désirée produces a rather florid young wine, verging on a bit tarty. The quality is high, but I admit it is not a style I particularly like. This tasting was revealing however, for as Désirée ages, it tightens up and becomes more classic and appealing. In the best examples the minerality comes through. The minerality is perhaps surprising for this lieu-dit, which is in the 1er cru Les Plures on the Volnay side of Meursault, in terroir which is arguably better suited to Pinot Noir. It would be 1er cru if Lafon conformed with AC regulations and labelled it Les Plures. Is it worthy of 1er cru status? I certainly thought not before this tasting. There are lieux-dits in Meursault capable of producing wine of greater merit, but Désirée has certainly gone up a notch in my estimation, not least because it can show well in 'off' vintages. In youth, one would hard pressed make a good food match for Désirée, yet mature vintages, in particular 1996 and 1990, are undoubtedly wines to accompany food.

The tasting took place in June 2006.

Scoring village wine

Basic	13
Straightforward and attractive	14
Good	15
Very good	16
Deuxième cru (the top lieux-dits in Meursaults) could reach particularly good; a score equivalent to a sound 1er cru.	17

Meursault, Désirée, 2005

This is scented and rather exotic. The first impression of the palate is floral. It's undoubtedly ripe and rich, perhaps a little loose knit, heady and rather 'purple.' The body is broad, rounded but not without power. The acidity is sufficient and very integrated into the wine. It satisfactorily balances the rich fruit. The finish is scented and spicy. I marginally prefer the 2004 at the moment, but the 2005 is not a finished wine. The 2004 has improved with élevage, so a conservative score. From 2007/8. Score 16.5

Meursault, Désirée, 2004

This has a somewhat reserved aroma, which is probably due to bottling in April. The wine is more expressive and spicy on the attack, before it batters down. The flesh, which was obvious this time last year, is not as apparent now. Crisp, savoury acidity drives the palate, which is taut and long. It has decent focus and expression of minerality; good intensity and balance. It is rather restrained for Désirée at the moment, which bodes well. This has certainly improved and tightened up in the past 12 months. From 2007/8. Score 16.5

Meursault, Désirée, 2003

Oily, rich and honeyed aroma. Rather ponderous. It is wide and open on the attack, which rolls to a broad and sweeping palate. It is somewhat blowsy and undefined at the edges. A Rubensesque wine, fleshy, ripe and florid. It is heady, but the wine does follow through with a scented finish of good length. I would drink this now, while fruit-driven and attractive. Score 15

Meursault, Désirée, 2002

Very attractive aroma, which is pure, citrusy and succulent with a suggestion of honey. The nose is more youthful and direct than the attack, which is broad and open. It has good depth, firm intensity and is developing some secondary characters of toasted brioche and cashew nuts. However the finish is fresh and fruity, more consistent with the aroma. It is considerably longer than the 2003 and a touch longer than the 2004. More fruit focused than the mineral driven 2004. It should become more interesting and complex over the next 5 years. Score 16.5-17

Meursault, Désirée, 2001

This is developing secondary aromas on the nose with characters of toasted hazelnuts and even a suggestion of mushroom. The attack is fresh with sharp lemon acidity, which slices through the expressive and somewhat broad palate. The flavours are developing here too with greengage giving way to oatmeal, cheesy characters. It has sufficient concentration and a moderate finish, but is a wine to drink now. It lacks energy and I can see so no benefit in waiting longer. Score 15

Meursault, Désirée, 2000

A glossy and honeyed bouquet. Still deliciously fresh and bright, just developing some secondary characters of new hay and freshly baked brioche. It has a lovely, silky first impression on the palate. It is rounded, generous, firmly energetic with balancing acidity onto the finish. It has very good persistency. This wine is livelier and fresher than expected. A seductive wine, which is lovely now, but should develop more complexity. Drink now and over the next 10 years. Score 16.5

Meursault, Désirée, 1999

This has a wonderfully complex bouquet. Rich and honeyed, accompanied by nutty and floral notes. It is a good deal more developed than the 2000 on the palate and has moved into its tertiary stage. (Somewhat surprisingly in light of older and livelier vintages in the flight). It does not have the ample, plump fruit of the 2000 and as such would be better with food at this stage. It is perhaps a little leaner and less intense than expected. The acidity is firm and carries this wine to a decent finish with more toasty, biscuit characters than fruit. In some respects it resembles the 2004. It is quite refined and a touch mineral, but is it a little disappointing for 1999? Score 16-16.5

Meursault, Désirée, 1998

Petrol bouquet and tertiary palate, not particularly intense, but livelier and more structured than expected of 1998. It is straight, pure, direct and shows minerality together with roasted nuts. It has a decent saline finish. Not at all bad for an 'off' vintage. Given one's expectations of 1999 and modest hopes for 1998, the latter is a more welcome surprise. Score 15

Meursault, Désirée, 1997

Unctuous bouquet with full marmalade intensity. A very harmonious palate, rounded, fleshy somewhat florid, but Désirée carries this better as a more mature wine. The wine is soft, but fresh enough and the finish has more succulence than the finish of 1998 and 1999. An appealing wine to drink now, while it still has some energy. Score 15.5-16

***Meursault, Désirée, 1996**

Much straighter on the bouquet after the 1997 - marmite and toasted nuts. Firm and direct strike to a long and linear palate. Excellent backbone. Juicy acidity, certainly assertive, but the wine has sufficient depth and extract to carry this. This is the most classic wine of the flight so far and the most powerful. Drink now, but it may have as many 10 years in it and should continue to become more complex. The best finish to date. I would be tempted to keep it this wine a while. Score 17

Meursault, Désirée, 1995

Fleshier and rich as buttered toast on the aroma. Very expressive on the nose coming after the 1996. A broader attack to a palate which is sweeping and flowing. If one was to criticise, it hollows out a touch in the middle, although it comes back on the finish. The 1996 is clearly more impressive in terms of balance, intensity and potential to age further. This is lovely, rather elegant in fact, but it may well become drier as it ages further. The 1995 Désirée falls between the excellent 1996 and the over performing 1994, perhaps to its detriment. Score 16. Drink now and drink up.

Meursault, Désirée, 1994

Nutty, rich and surprisingly compact on the palate. This is much better and more energetic than expected. The acidity is firm and carries this wine. It has enough flesh and intensity. This would be lovely with food now and should not collapse in the short-term. Score 14.5-15

Meursault, Désirée, 1992

Glossy, intense and dense on the nose. A scrumptious, succulent and rounded palate with compact, crystallised fruit, balanced with nice acidity. It is expressive and energetic and has a persistent and vivacious finish. The quality is on a par with 1996 and 1990, but the style is plumper, juicier and more fruit-driven than the linear austerity of the 1996. This feels as though it is still on an upward curve, gaining complexity, but I am not sure I would risk it. Drink and enjoy now, or chance it over the next five years. A fresher than expected 1992, which lives up to the hype of this vintage. Score 17

Meursault, Désirée, 1990

This is a lovely mature wine, considerably more evolved than the 1992. It is fully developed and although it may well plateau, there can be no benefit in keeping it, as there might the 1992. It is deliciously nutty, slightly caramel, wonderfully integrated, fresh enough and has lovely balance and harmony. Score 16.5-17

Domaine Carillon, Puligny-Montrachet Vertical of Perrières

Carillon's wine shakes off its primary stage quite quickly and then the changes happen more gradually. On average the Perrières needs about 4 or 5 years to start drinking and 4-8 is a good time over which to see it evolve. The vines here are 29 years old.

***Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2005**

This is compact and glossy on the attack. It is rounded, ample and deep in the middle palate, but it really shows on the finish which stretches out this wine to its more familiar profile. It is gravely, linear and very persistent. Fine to very fine. From 2010

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2004

This was bottled in March (2006).

There is a tight almost petrolly character on the aroma. Some nutty characters with the greengage fruit. The palate is streamlined, compact and mineral. The acidity is racy and the body of this wine very well defined. There is a pleasing austerity to the finish. Score 18.5-19. From 2009/12

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2003

The yield was between 15 and 18 hl/ha – due to the heat.

Rich, oatmeal unctuous character to the aroma. The palate is delicious. It is already showing some developed character of oyster mushrooms and new hay. It is very contained – concentrated certainly, but not fat or flabby at all. The minerality, although less than normal, offsets the fruit and creates the balance here, keeping the wine fresh. It is long, savoury, mealy and gravely on the finish. Score 18 certainly for the vintage. You could drink this now or wait a couple of years.

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2002

On the nose there are savoury and fruit characters, greengages and biscuit. The attack is still very youthful and fruit-driven – delicious sweet lemon fruit. The palate is redolent of a good summer – a wonderful balance of fresh acidity and ripe fruit. The whole thing is beautifully balanced. Very streamlined and elegant. A wine with marvelous finesse. Top notch. Score 19. From 2007

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2001

The total acidity is 4-4.3 (H2 S04)

This is developing secondary aromas of ripe brie with buttered toast and biscuit notes, yet there is still a touch of lemon. The palate is significantly more evolved than the 2002, drier, harsher and showing less sweet fruit. The acidity is more to the fore and the minerality less embedded in the wine. Score 17.5. Drink now and over the short term of 5 years or so.

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 2000

Unctuous aroma, honey and sweet new hay. Firmly into secondary characters, maybe even a touch of the tertiary. The palate is rich and golden and rounded for Perrières. This has delicious balance and is very generous. There are some oatmeal and mushroom characters on the palate. The acidity is svelte and integrated. The palate is 'sweet' and persistent. The minerality has a sheen to it. Score 18.5. Delicious now, but it will continue to age for 10-12 years

Puligny-Montrachet, Perrières, 1999

This has a tighter, haughtier aroma. It is showing some tertiary characters – a touch of marmite. The attack is more austere and the palate immediately grippy. This is much more racy, linear and direct. Very deep, tight and energetic. Textbook stuff. You can drink this now and over the next decade or more. Excellent length. Score 19.

**Domaine Patrick Javillier, Meursault
Vertical of Tête De Murgers**

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 2004

Some rich, petrol characters. Nice fresh firm acidity. The palate is focused, mineral and slightly austere. This has tightened up considerably. Bottled 3 months ago. It needs 2-3 years. Score 17

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 2003

Only magnums of the 2003, as Javillier forgot to put any standard bottles aside. This is gaining colour and rich hay aromas. Very opulent, open and glossy, full, rounded and ripe. It is sufficiently well balanced and has plenty of stuffing. I like it now, but Patrick thinks it will keep – like 1947. “You can keep the bottle open for many days and will stay the same. 1947 was a vintage without acidity it has kept.” In 2003 he used all the lees, not just the finer lees, “to give the maximum matter to allow for long ageing.” Score 16

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 2002

This is much livelier on the aroma. It is really fresh and bright and developing a touch of honey. Very even across the palate with lovely citrus fruit and juicy acidity which carries on to the long finish. Very harmonious and very energetic and it has surprisingly good intensity. It needs another 2-3 years, so from 2008/9. (Patrick thinks a year longer). Score 17

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 2001

This is developing some more biscuit aromas and on the palate it shows secondary complexity. The acidity is very firm and comes though on the finish. Ready. Score 15.5-16

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 2000

Mushroom and hay on the bouquet. Full, rich and almost honeyed. It has delicious sweet fruit and is very broad. You could leave this another couple of years to become more interesting or drink now for some fruit character. Patrick agrees on two years as a ‘from’ date and agrees that it is too closed at the moment and can continue to improve. Score 17

After 2000 Javillier began bottling all the vintage after 18 months of ageing. Before 2000 he divided the cuvée into two parts. Cuvée Special was aged for 18 months. The normal cuvée was aged for 12. Javillier tells me that the 12 month bottling was easier to taste at first, but at 18 months in bottle they crossed over and the Cuvée Special took over to become the better wine in the long term.

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 1999

Here we can see the two bottlings side by side:

12 months: This bottling is fresher. Firm, direct, linear palate. More chalky acidity is present and the wine is streamlined to the finish. Slightly toasty on the finish, which is quite long. Nicely balanced and energetic. I like it now and would drink it over the next 5 years.

18 months: This bottling is more integrated on the nose. The palate is also more evolved. Richly honeyed and evolved but with a firm structure. There is a lot of matter, but it is leaner. It would be good with food and ready now.

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 1998

12 months: Much more evolved on the nose than the 1999. This is in its tertiary phase, although the palate is livelier than the bouquet. It doesn't have a great deal of flesh, so the acidity is quite apparent. Savoury characters dominate. This is very ready to drink now. In fact drink up as this will not evolve beneficially. This has certainly reached the top of Javillier's 'evolution curve' (see last year's notes in Issue 2), if it is not already on its way down the other side. Score 15

Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 1997

12 months: Definitely tertiary now on the nose with some honey. It is a little fresher than the 1998. The palate is thinning out though, very savoury, nutty, honeyed, mushroom and marmitey. Lovely now and finish is good. It stays on the palate. Drink up. Score 16

***Meursault, Tête De Murgers, 1996**

12 months: The bouquet here is more interesting, more robust. This shows the superiority of the vintage in the power, muscularly and dry mineral acidity. Savoury, but very expressive, alive and kicking. The finish is firm and direct. This should plateau short term. Top notch village. Just delicious. Score 17

***Meursault, Clos de Cromin, 1990**

12 months: This is savoury and rich with good intensity. It is surprisingly fresh on the palate with lemony fruit and bright juicy acidity. It is very nutty, even and delicious. Drinking very well now. Maybe it fades a bit on the finish, but then it comes back in the mouth. It has aged remarkably well for a village wine. You could not expect more. Score 17-17.5