

REMOISSENET PÈRE et FILS

Profile and Tasting notes

Burgundy-Report by Bill Nanson, Autumn 2007

Remoissenet Père et Fils, is an old and established name that is slowly and quietly carving out a new name for itself - as a producer of good reds!

Founded in 1877, this unusual and interesting company was run for about 30 years by Roland Remoissenet from a stunning 14th century building in Beaune - externally there is not much to see, but on the inside it's very special. Roland Remoissenet's last 10 years at the helm were hardly the zenith of quality wine production, so in 2005 when, at the age of 75 he decided to retire, and the company was sold to the New York financiers and developers Edward and Howard Milstein, together with Maison Louis Jadot and Toronto-based Halpern Enterprises, it was expected that the change should herald an improvement. It was reported that the Milsteins took the majority shareholding on a total sale price of around €10m. Included in the sale, was the firm, its vineyards and cellars - and what cellars - it was reported that over a million bottles of Burgundy from 1950 to 1990 were included. If so, the purchase price was rather cheap - that's only 10 Euros per bottle!

Remoissenet Today

Apparently Roland Remoissenet was a dashing figure with quite a personality - by all accounts a hard act to follow - the new face of Remoissenet today is Bérnard Repolt. Bérnard, who was previously president of Louis Jadot is an engaging and witty character to spend time with and provides all the anecdotes that you can never print, I think he is probably a more than adequate replacement for Roland! Bérnard is responsible for well over 200,000 bottles per year of production - and of course those cellars.

The content of the cellars is impressive, but it's not all diamonds; amongst the old Richebourgs and bottles of Roumier Bonnes-Mares and de Vogüé Musigny bottled by Remoissenet there are even interesting large-format bottles of 1978 bourgogne, but you might also find walls of 1992 Santenay which I assume is a little more difficult to place! There has been some criticism of older wines for their apparent youth and inferences that the bottles are not 100%

pinot noir. Bérnard is very open when discussing this point, and although he was never part of the team that either made or procured the wines, he makes two simple points:

1. The wines are what they are, and reflect the era in which they were produced - but no-one around today could tell you anything about the what was put into the bottles.
2. The important fact to consider for those that claim the wines 'too young to be believed' is that the wines have only ever rested in one place since they were made - storage has been impeccable.

This market for older wines is very different to that of their normal annual production; bottles are mainly purchased by enthusiasts rather than merchants, but Bérnard reports the trade is interesting and that he is comfortable with selling around 3-4% of these reserves per year. I have heard from various sources that the wines vary from amazing to so-so, but clearly even if the contents are only 'interesting', a large part of the experience comes from thinking about what was happening in the world when those grapes were harvested in 1959 for instance...

The amount of wine sold by Remoissenet is out of all proportion to their sales of older bottles and their vineyard holdings, which amount to just about 2.5 hectares of Beaune 1er crus, including Marconnets, Bressandes and Grèves. Volume is augmented by significant négoce purchases, but also Remoissenet exploit the Lanvin family holdings in the Côte de Nuits and represent Baron Thénard for the majority of their Montrachet and other holdings. Thénard are one of the largest owners of Montrachet, so you could almost call Bérnard Repolt Mr. Montrachet!

The wines

Remoissenet had for a long time the reputation for making nice whites but the reds were a little woolly and didn't reflect well the names on the labels. This reputation for the reds came about during the 1990's and until the retirement of Roland Remoissenet - perhaps Roland was less focused; clearly it was an easy time to buy barrels of just about

anything you wished, but how good was the quality overview? It seems not so good - interesting then that the whites were generally okay:

...an underrated source of Montrachet...

...(this wine) has now developed into a stylish and understated Monty that is altogether reflective of the unparalleled character that is Montrachet...Remoissenet is rarely mentioned in discussions about who makes the finest Montrachet, it is nonetheless a consistently good choice for less than painfully priced Montrachet, assuming any wine this expensive can be considered approachable

Allen Meadows: Burghound, Oct. 2001



Remoissenet's Montrachet du Domaine Thénard is produced from Thénard's two Montrachet parcels from the Chassagne side of the vineyard next to the vines of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. The parcels total 1.83 hectares and were replanted in four stages between 1936 and 1976. The Thénards are actually the second largest landowners in Le Montrachet after the Marquis de Laguiche family (bottled by Drouhin) who's vines these parcels face. But the relationship with Thénard is not just for Montrachet - there is also Corton Clos du Roi and Grands-Echezeaux.

The Remoissenet cuverie is close to the swimming-pool complex on the other side of the Beaune périphique. It's a large place with plenty of open-top wooden fermentation tanks - there is clearly some investment as many are new - 2005 was their first vinification. The whites have their own room which can be slightly warmed to quicken the onset of the malolactic fermentation, but the rest of the élevage is done in the cooler part of the cellars. For whites (and some reds too) Bernard is using a proportion of 340 litre casks - they are very happy with the results. When I visited towards the end of November they were starting to bottle the first of their 2006's.

For their 2007 harvest they delayed their picking until the 6th and 7th of September; Bernard said that it cost them almost one third of their crop by selection, but they were very happy with the maturity of what went into the tanks. They will normally keep up to 20% of their stems, but this level is only for the most ripe.

We made a short tour of some 2007 barrels before looking at those 2006's waiting to be bottled - the 07 reds, like a number of other domains are currently showing some lovely chocolate covered cherry aromas. Actually I'd be happy to have any of the 06's in the cellar and both colours too! - though my clear favourite of all was the 2006 Bienvenues Bâtard-Montrachet...

2006 Remoissenet, Meursault 1er Goutte d'Or

This shows a really classy and deep nose - very pretty. Sweetness, concentration and quite some width in the mouth. Extends amply into the finish. This is very, very nice.

We then contrasted two Puligny's - Garenne and Les Garennes - the first mineral with lovely taught acidity, the second deeper and softer. Bernard felt that the two would be complimentary and so blended to a single cuvée.

2006 Remoissenet, Bienvenues Bâtard-Montrachet

There's a little reduction on the nose, but it's in the mouth that this impresses: creamy and wide - still a hint of petillance, intense in the mid-palate and oh-so long in the finish, quite savoury too. This made a great impression with its poise.

2006 Remoissenet, Bâtard-Montrachet

After the reductive Bienvenues this shows much higher tones with flower blossom aromatics. In the mouth it's tighter and less expressive. The density is not in question, neither is the balance.

2006 Remoissenet, Montrachet Baron Thénard

Wide and densely concentrated aromatics. Like the Bâtard this is concentrated and very tight. The main difference versus the Bâtard is the more mineral intensity on the mid-palate. Poised and balanced but giving little away.

2006 Remoissenet, Nuits St.Georges 1er Les Damodes

Impressive cherry nose. Mineral with a clean and fresh plate - lovely.

2006 Remoissenet, Chambolle-Musigny

Lovely depth on the nose with a faint toffee edge. Likewise the palate shows ample depth, nice concentration and balance. Just a faint bitterness on the end of the tannin - but that will fade. Very nice.

2006 Remoissenet, Chambertin

Now here the nose is really talking - lots to find in here. In the mouth you are impressed by the width and the dovetailed minerality. The fruit is creamy and the length also shows a mineral edge. Will be fine.

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