

DOMAINE BERNARD MOREAU

Reviews of 2015 Vintage Wines

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Readers will already be aware that I revere Alex Moreau as one of the best winemakers in Chassagne-Montrachet, and it is pleasing to see that his reputation is increasing each year—from the United States to London to Hong Kong. "I was a little anxious because of the warm and dry summer," Alex Moreau told me as we tasted in his cuverie. "We knew it would be an early vintage and I always have to have a Chardonnay with good maturity. But we had a decent volume of rain in mid-August that maybe saved the vintage. We could see the vineyard change. Normally we would have picked between 5 to 10 September, but we found the phenolic maturity was already there and we started 26 August. The highest alcohol is the Chenevottes at 13.1%, so I'm happy with that. The acidity is good, not quite 2015, but I'm happy. I was concerned that they would not show the terroir, but actually I find that they do. The maturation was normal. I will bottle most of the wines in spring, maybe some of the Saint-Aubin in January. There is no rush. The freshness is there, so I want a good élevage. One thing about 2015 is that I have not seen a vintage so stable in terms of oxygen. After the alcoholic fermentation, I took barrel samples and left them for a little while. Usually you can see the wine get tired, but without SO₂, the wine was still stable after a week. I used a little less SO₂ during the ageing, but I will still add some in before bottling. The last time I saw this stability was in 2003. Of course, the potential acidity on limestone soils can be different, but it is more the perception of acidity. The feeling of the freshness can be more intense."

This was a superb set of wines from Alex, especially within the context of such a warm growing season that must have constantly threatened to erase the nervosité of the wines. Although perhaps not quite as consistent across the range of Chassagnes as in 2014, certainly those on more calcareous soils and/or at higher altitudes were advantaged by naturally cooler microclimates. My pick is the superb Chassagne Les Caillerets or if you can find it, one of 300 bottles of Bâtard-Montrachet. Also, do not overlook Alex's reds that had been transferred into barrel a fortnight earlier and were samples from tank, in particular his monopole of La Cardeuse in Morgeot and a fine Volnay 1er Cru Santenots.

Vins Blancs

2015 Bourgogne Blanc

The 2015 Bourgogne, the only wine that had been bottled, has an attractive apricot blossom-scented bouquet that offers good intensity for a generic white. The palate has a taut, quite linear opening with crisp green apple and a dash of spice, a little short maybe, yet with ample freshness and energy. Drink Date 2016 - 2019 **Rating 86**

2015 St. Aubin "en Remilly"

The 2015 Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly had just been fined and will be bottled December or January. It has a lovely, mineral-rich, quite intense bouquet with subtle white peach and citrus notes blossoming in the glass. The palate is very well balanced, crisp and precise, tightly coiled but gently fanning out towards the finish with delicate lemon curd and dried orange peel notes, all with an underlying mineralité. Drink Date 2018 - 2028 **Rating (91 - 93)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet Villages

The 2015 Chassagne Montrachet Villages, matured in 20% new oak, felt a little withdrawn on the nose with light waxy, almost resinous aromas developing. The palate has a little fatness on the entry, good weight in the mouth, the richness kept in check by the acidity with dried apricot and hints of almond. It just misses the tension of the 2014 last year, but it should drink nicely for 4-7 years. Drink Date 2018 - 2023 **Rating (86 - 88)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet "Les Champ Gains"

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Champs Gain has a reserved, austere and yet very focused, Puligny-like bouquet that gains intensity in the glass. There is fine mineralité locked into this wine. The palate is very well balanced with a piercing line of acidity that lends real energy and frisson without tipping over into any shrillness. Blind, you might assume this is a 2014 rather than a 2015, and it should be very attractive once in bottle. Drink Date 2018 - 2028 **Rating (90 - 92)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vergers”

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Vergers, which is a cuvée that tends to ferment and age slowly, was initially subdued. However, after just a couple of minutes, the aromas awaken and offer enticing scents of lemon curd, granite, a hint of vanilla pod and almond, all well defined. The palate is very fresh with a fine line of acidity. This is one of the most harmonious samples I tasted from Alex Moreau, not a hair out of place, with a beautifully poised, almost crystalline finish. Given the growing season, this should be considered a great success. Drink Date 2018 - 2030 **Rating (91 - 93)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chenevottes has a slightly earthier bouquet compared to the Les Vergers at the moment, perhaps more aloof and distant. Hints of grass clipping and Granny Smith apples emerge with time. The palate is fresh and clean on the entry, an elegant Chenevottes with good depth, hints of praline and almond towards the understated finish, although I personally prefer the energy conveyed by the Les Vergers. What you might describe as a "placid" Chassagne-Montrachet. Drink Date 2017 - 2026 **Rating (88 - 90)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru La Maltroie has a forthright, quite penetrating, mineral-driven bouquet with scents of grey slate and wet limestone permeating the citrus fruit. There is exquisite definition and terroir expression in situ. The palate is taut, fresh and linear: a dash of spice complementing the green fruit (Granny Smith apple and kiwi) that leads to a cohesive, very persistent and saline finish. There is great substance to this Maltroie and it should age with style. Drink Date 2018 - 2030 **Rating (91 - 93)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Morgeots is more akin to the Les Chenevottes in style, a little earthy and reserved, touches of wet stone and then a faint hint of white peach that emerges with time. The palate is fresh and crisp on the entry, perhaps one of Alex Moreau's more conservative wines in the making, linear and correct until the final furlong, where it delivers a lovely, spicy, lemongrass/saline tang. Quite a mercurial wine that was constantly evolving in the glass, it should mature into a very fine Chassagne-Montrachet. Drink Date 2018 - 2030 **Rating (91 - 93)**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”

The 2015 Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Grandes Ruchottes had a very stony, almost wet clay-scented bouquet that did not quite have the precision of the other premier crus, at least at this moment. The palate is much

better with a keen line of acidity, brisk citrus peel and green apple notes, a hint of white peach and almond with fine tension on the finish. Perhaps I would have liked a little more persistence and energy, but that may develop once in bottle. Drink Date 2018 - 2028 **Rating (89 - 91)**

2015 Bâtard-Montrachet

The 2015 Bâtard Montrachet Grand Cru, matured in a single one-year old barrel, offers intense citrus lemon, dried mango and mineral scents on the nose, building in power in the glass whilst maintaining fine definition. The palate is fresh and crisp on the entry with cheeky hints of vanilla and pralines that complement the citrus fruit. Maybe it just needs a little more nervosité on the finish? Still, this is very fine, although the 2014 delivered much more class and sophistication. Drink Date 2019 - 2035 **Rating (91 - 93)**

2015 Chevalier-Montrachet

The 2015 Chevalier Montrachet Grand Cru comes from the equivalent of three regular barrels actually aged in two larger 350-liter barrels. The bouquet is very intense, showing a slight reduction that does not impede upon the mineral expression, those scents of cold wet limestone and slate. The palate is crisp and fresh on the entry, very cohesive and with great depth, the oak in good proportion to the fruit, leading to a caressing, walnut-tinged finish. While not as transcendental as the 2014 could become, this remains a very finely tuned Chevalier-Montrachet. Drink Date 2018 - 2035 **Rating (92 - 94)**

Vins Rouges

2015 Bourgogne Rouge

The 2015 Bourgogne Rouge had been bottled just prior to the harvest. It offers bright blackberry and raspberry scents mixed with briary on the nose that is very well defined. The palate is medium-bodied with chewy tannin on the entry, quite dense and powerful, but just missing a little precision and delineation on the finish. Drink over the next couple of years. Drink Date 2017 - 2019 **Rating 85**

2015 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge

The 2015 Chassagne Montrachet Vieilles Vignes Rouge, aged in 10% new oak, offers mulberry and raspberry preserve scents on the nose, a light floral scent that should develop once in bottle. The palate is medium-bodied with a gentle grip in the mouth, a little sinew here perhaps in lieu of finesse, although there is good density and length on the broody finish. It just needs to brighten up a little. Drink Date 2018 - 2026 **Rating (87 - 89)**

2015 Volnay “Santenots”

The 2015 Volnay 1er Cru les Santenots, aged in 25% new oak, has a brisk redcurrant and raspberry-scented bouquet, bunches of roses emerging with time and imparting more

complexity as it aerates. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin, a crisp line of acidity, hints of damson towards the harmonious finish that feels very focused and refined. What a lovely Volnay from a winemaker synonymous with white. Drink Date 2018 - 2030 **Rating (90 - 92)**