

DOMAINE BERNARD MOREAU

Reviews of 2016 Vintage Wines

View From The Cellar – John Gilman

Nov/Dec 2017 – Issue #72

As for the white wines of 2016, there is a bit more variation than in the red wines and it is not quite as consistently excellent of a vintage as it is for the red wines, but that said, there are also an awfully large number of truly excellent wines. Some are better structured and more classically proportioned than others, but all the best wines share truly gorgeous fruit, very good soil signatures and plenty of depth and concentration. I got the feeling that where *vignerons* were working with parcels with very, very short crops from frost damage, many sought to avoid the super-concentrated style found in some 2012 white Burgundies and have produced more classically proportioned wines in 2016. They may still be concentrated from low yields, but they have retained more of the typical cut, grip and mineral drive of more classically-styled vintages.

As **Alexandre Moreau** mentioned, when talking about some of his bottlings from the most severely frosted parcels, “they are concentrated from the very low yields, but at the same time, I think we did a very good job at maintaining the classic style of wines from our domaine, with plenty of minerality and racy personalities, as I did not want wines that are too heavy from the short crop.”

As I was limiting my November visits to many of the most talented *vignerons* in Burgundy, I can imagine that there are other estates where the results in 2016 are less satisfying than what I found on this trip, and there are probably a significant number of rather dense, overly-concentrated white wines to be found from the vintage of 2016.

Alex Moreau was both stoic at his crop losses due to frost in 2016 and very happy with the quality and style of the wines in the cellars here this year, as he was very vigilant to try and keep the house style of minerality and elegant purity in the wines, despite the draconian yields of this vintage. The domaine lost fully seventy percent of its crop to frost damage in 2016, as Chassagne-Montrachet was one of the hardest hit communes in the entire Côte d’Or, and there were not enough grapes in the Moreau family’s parcels in Chenevottes, Vergers or Champgains to produce viable *cuvées* of these premier crus, so the grapes that were gathered here went into the Chassagne “villages” bottling. Alex noted that “one of the biggest challenges of 2016 was to not produce overly concentrated wines- perhaps in the

style of some 2012s- which is very difficult when making wines from such tiny yields, but to retain the house style here of elegant and mineral wines.” Monsieur Moreau has succeeded in this aspiration beautifully in 2016 and the wines are fresh, vibrant, light on their feet and quite crystalline in their underlying expressions of soil tones in this vintage. The sad thing is there is so little wine to go around, but at least 2017 is a generous crop and this is only a single vintage aberration of allocation shortfalls. The Moreau brothers began picking on September 21st in 2016 and had the whole crop collected in less than a week. Two of the wines that have been in the cellars for several years now will no longer be produced here, as both the Bâtard-Montrachet and Volnay “Santenots” that Alex was making from purchased grapes were replanted in 2016, as the proprietors of each parcel felt the old vines were in need of being grubbed up. With the other two Volnays that the domaine has produced in recent years, Caillerets and Clos des Chênes, the frost damage in the two parcels necessitated that they be blended in 2016 into a Volnay “Premier Cru” *cuvée* (which has turned out excellently). The Moreau family’s red wines in Chassagne were not spared from the frost, as the Vieilles Vignes bottling was produced from yields of only seventeen hectoliters per hectare in this vintage! Amongst the top white wines in the cellar, there are only single casks of Chassagne “Grandes Ruchottes” and “Caillerets” this year, as well as Chevalier-Montrachet. However, a couple of the premier crus were spared the worst of the frost, so that Alex was able to realize forty hectoliters per hectare in his parcel of En Remilly in St. Aubin and he also noted that the forty to forty-five percent of the crop he lost in Morgeot “was not too bad by the standards of 2016.” Happily, though there is not a lot of wine here for most *cuvées*, the quality is stellar and those who are lucky enough to hunt down bottles of Domaine Moreau’s 2016s will be thrilled with their excellence!

Vins Blancs

2016 Bourgogne Blanc

Half the crop was lost in the domaine’s Bourgogne parcels in 2016, but the wine has turned out really well. This was already bottled at the time of my visit and showing beautifully, offering up a fine bouquet of apple, a touch of

peach, a lovely base of soil, citrus zest and hints of the honeycomb to come with a bit of bottle age. On the palate the wine is crisp, pure and full-bodied, with a wide open and succulent personality, bright acids and a long, classy finish. Delicious Bourgogne. 2018-2030. **89**.

2016 St. Aubin “En Remilly”

In the context of 2016, Alex Moreau’s parcel in en Remilly was one of the most prolific and the wine is absolutely pure and classic in aromatic profile, though a bit more powerful at the core than customary. The lovely nose offers up a beautiful blend of pear, apple, a touch of *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones, spring flowers, a dollop of fresh almond and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, broad shoulders, but marvelous cut and a long, precise and classy finish. Fine juice. 2018-2035+. **90+**.

2016 Chassagne-Montrachet

Even with the addition of the small production from the three premier crus mentioned above, quantities of this superb bottling are down by fully sixty percent in 2016. The bouquet here is beautiful, delivering a combination of apple, pear, a hint of fresh pineapple, a fine base of soil, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and concentrated at the core (though not quite as much as the Remilly), with lovely energy and focus, bright acids and excellent cut and grip on the long and complex finish. This is an excellent village wine. 2018-2040+. **91**.

2016 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”

The 2016 Maltroie *chez* Moreau had been assembled in tank four or five weeks ahead of my visit, but not yet fined. The wine was showing beautifully, offering up a pure and expressive bouquet of apple, peach, hint of honeycomb, a gorgeous base of soil, fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a lovely core, excellent focus and backend energy and a long, complex and snappy finish. Lovely juice in the making. 2020-2045+. **92+**.

2016 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”

I always love Alex Moreau’s example of Morgeot, which I find more elegant and minerally than many from this large appellation. The 2016 is outstanding here, offering up a stunning bouquet of pear, apple, a touch of pastry cream, chalky minerality, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and utterly classic in profile, with a very good core (but not overly concentrated by any stretch of the imagination), bright, snappy acids and a very, very long, pure and complex finish of nearly unbounded energy and class. Exceptional Morgeot! 2020-2050. **94**.

2016 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”

The single cask of Grandes Ruchottes 2016 was in a similar stage to the Caillerets and every bit as breathtaking. The bouquet is beautiful, but more reserved today than the Caillerets, offering up a fine constellation of apple, pear, lemon zest, chalky minerality, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and vibrant, with a great core, brilliant backend mineral drive and a very, very long, racy and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2023-2055. **95+**.

2016 Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru

The 2016 Chevalier-Montrachet from Alex Moreau is another great wine. The bouquet is pure and properly reserved at the present time, wafting from the glass in a blend of pear, fresh almond, delicious apple, hints of *crème patissière*, a gorgeous base of chalky minerality, orange and lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied, pure and supremely elegant in profile, with outstanding mid-palate depth, great inner tension and breed and a long, racy finish. A stunning young Chevalier. 2025-2060. **97+**.

Vins Rouges

2016 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge

I really like the 2016 Chassagne old vine bottling *chez* Moreau this year, as the elegance of the vintage is very much on display already in this cuvée. The bouquet is pure and precise, offering up a lovely blend of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a hint of violet and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full and quite sappy at the core, with superb purity and focus, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully balanced finish. Great juice and one of the great red wine values to be found in the vintage! 2024-2060. **91**.

2016 Volnay Premier Cru

The 2016 blend on the Premier Cru Volnay is seventy percent Clos des Chênes and thirty percent Caillerets. Alex Moreau raised this wine in a single, used, three hundred and fifty liter cask in 2016. The wine shows outstanding aromatic promise, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, a dollop of blood orange, gamebird, a complex base of soil, gamebird, a touch of Caillerets spice tones, raw cocoa and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full and nascently complex, with a sappy core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and fine backend mineral drive on the long and tangy finish. This will be lovely. 2026-2065 **94**