

# DOMAINE BERNARD MOREAU

## *Reviews of 2016 & 2015 White Burgundy*

*Vinous – Stephen Tanzer*

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**A**ccording to **Alexandre Moreau**, 2016 brought extreme conditions but not extreme wines. In fact, he says, “they are very classic, and there was less variation according to picking dates in Chassagne-Montrachet in 2016 than in 2015.” Of course, he also lost about 60% of his crop in '16, with some parcels yielding no usable fruit at all. Moreau started harvested on September 21 and did “just a bit” of chaptalization; the wines finished with about 13% to 13.2% alcohol. They were sulfured at the end of March after the malolactic fermentations finished, but the grape sugars are still close to two grams per liter. Moreau believes that the wines are “continuing to work” and are likely to be drier by the time the go into bottle.

Moreau was one of a number of winemakers who reported bottling his 2015 whites a bit later than usual, and my experience to this point is that longer *élevage* was a smart choice with this vintage. “Some people said to bottle early to preserve the fruit,” said Moreau, who bottled nothing until January of '17 and finished his crus in March (most of them went into cuves prior to the '16 harvest). “But our wines gained in freshness. I’ve rarely seen wines as stable as the '15s, even with very low levels of sulfur. Lots of '15s will be drunk young--after all, they're perfect for restaurants because they're easy to understand--but that will be a shame because they have long aging potential.” Moreau added that although his wines went through full malolactic fermentation, they had started with very low levels of malic acidity and didn't change much during the process.

He also admitted that because he prefers wines with easy digestibility, the very hot season of 2015 stressed him. “We had important rain in mid-August that saved the vintage by restarting the ripening, especially of the skins. Originally, we expected to start harvesting between September 5 and 10, but we gained up to 1.7 degrees of potential alcohol during three days in late August, so we started on the 27th. Moreau also expressed the opinion that “the very ripe years last longer than the high-acid years.”

### Vins Blancs

#### 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet

(the yield was down 45% from normal in 2016): Palish bright yellow. Lively aromas of pear, citrus fruits and minerals show a faint metallic quality. Not a fat wine but shows very good definition and lift to its juicy, saline lime and fresh herb flavors. Nicely concentrated, chewy wine with modest size but good intensity and energy. Finishes juicy, aromatic and persistent, more classic than the 2015 version.

**Tasted : June 2017 (89-90) pts**

#### 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru “La Maltroie”

(production was down 55% in this premier cru in 2016): Medium yellow. Exotic yellow peach and spicy oak on the very ripe nose; Alexandre Moreau told me this wine is showing much less of the lichee and Viognier notes that it displayed just after the end of the malolactic fermentation and that he “has no idea how it will be by the bottling.” Dense, sweet and chewy; strong but not thick, offering a sexy sugar/acid balance and a firm spine to its surprisingly dynamic flavors of lemon drop, lemon oil and minerals. Sexy juice. (The Moreaus did not make a Chassagne-Montrachet Les Vergers or Chenevottes in 2016 owing to the frost; what Chenevottes there was went into the village wine.)

**Tasted : June 2017 (89-92) pts**

#### 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru “Morgeot”

Bright light yellow. Yellow peach and ripe lemon on the nose; much less open than the Maltroie. Big, rich and round, but with surprisingly firm acidity framing the chewy flavors of lemon drop, menthol, fresh herbs and wildflowers. Finishes dry, suave and long, with lingering notes of flowers, herbs and minerals.

**Tasted : June 2017 (90-92) pts**

#### 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru “Les Grandes Ruchottes”

(from a 1939 planting, the only vines planted by Alexandre's grandfather Marcel and not his father Bernard; following the damaging frost here in 2016, he pulled up part of the old vines this spring; just one one-year-old barrel of wine produced in 2016): Aromas of lemon, lavender, menthol, new-mown hay and spices. Quite dry and classic, and still holding a good bit of gas (Moreau thinks it's still working),

this powerful mineral expression shows terrific concentration and lemony cut but no excess weight. This very promising wine may need time to harmonize in the bottle but the saline, very long finish is already exciting.

**Tasted : June 2017 (91-93) pts**

**2016 Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru**

(just a single one-year-old barrel produced): Mint, menthol, licorice and crushed rock on the nose, plus a hint of lemon oil. Floral and aromatic in the mouth but slightly disjointed today--even a bit dry-edged--and in need of further élevage to fatten up its rather strict lemon oil and medicinal mineral flavors. A very lively and long wine but not large-scaled or expressive today, this youthfully strict Chevalier-Montrachet still needs to integrate its strong citrus/stony edge.

**Tasted : June 2017 (90-93) pts**