

# DOMAINE BERNARD MOREAU

## *Reviews of 2016 Vintage Wines*

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*December 2017 – The Wine Advocate #234*

“**T**hree vineyards that contribute to the Chassagne-Montrachet Village survived the frost,” comments **Alex Moreau**, and my heart lifts at the thought of those perishable vines defeating the odds and making it through until the end of the growing season. “Then on 14 July there was a small hailstorm and it wiped them out. Only those three.” My heart sinks. One often hears the phrase that winemaking is not fair and Jesus H. Christ, you have to think that when fate rolled the dice of fortune with respect to this Domaine's luck, the dice rolled off the table and were eaten by the cat. Who promptly rolled over dead. If any grower encapsulates how hard the 2016 growing season hit winemakers, it is here at Domaine Bernard Moreau.

“I lost 70% of the production,” he tells me, as sanguine as he can be. “There are only a few cuvées. Les Vergers, Champs Gain and Chenevottes...there is nothing. They are blended into the Chassagne Village. Still, it is an interesting vintage, so different from appellation to appellation, vineyard to vineyard. Chassagne was the most affected for the whites but then again, people with vineyards in the northern sector suffered a disaster while those in the southern part were less touched. All my ideas about spring frost were completely changed. I know I have land more sensitive to frost, but in 2016 it was more like a winter frost. All the conditions were there for frost. I woke up at 7:00 a.m. and saw ice on my neighbor's rooftop. [With respect to] frost, you wait a few hours to see the damage and so I stayed at home. We could see the vines across the road in Maltroye slowly, gradually going brown as the hours passed. We were shocked to see the damage in Grandes Ruchottes. We started the harvest on 21 September. The conditions were perfect and this was important because you had to judge the maturity of each vine, each with different numbers of bunches, and we did not want to pick too late. Psychologically, you still want the pickers to go into the vineyard even if they pick just two buckets of grapes. You cannot accept that you just will not send them in. But it was very quiet in the winery. Normally the first trailer comes in at around 8:45 a.m., but in 2016 it was not until 11:00 am. There was also very high mildew pressure.”

One important point to make is that Alex resolved to maintain the style of the domaine. “The fruit had to be clean, and I wanted to make sure I was working with clear juice so that I could keep working with natural yeasts and with no

racking during élevage. Some cuvées were reduced from say ten to twelve barrels to one or two, but I wanted to keep the same percentage of new oak and not change the style, not only for 2016 but for 2017.” By this, Alex means that he did not want an excess quantity of barrels after 2016 that might persuade him to increase the proportion of new oak the following year. As you can guess, this was a shorter visit than usual to one of my favorite Chassagne producers. However, Alex has succeeded in maintaining the style of his wines, and the Chassagne-Montrachet Les Grandes Ruchottes and Maltroie are outstanding, ditto an impressive Saint-Aubin En Remilly. Quantities are extremely small, but fortunately, 2017 was more generous and at least in terms of production it is back to normal from next year.

### Vins Blancs

#### **2016 St. Aubin Premier Cru “En Remilly”**

The 2016 Saint-Aubin 1<sup>er</sup> Cru En Remilly, which was taken from tank and fined, has quite a powerful, well-defined, lemon zest and walnut-scented bouquet that just springs from the glass. The palate is well defined with hints of blackcurrant complementing the malic fruit, with a touch of spiciness coming through on the finish. Very fine--one of the best from Alex Moreau this year. Drink Date 2019 - 2029 **Rating (90 - 92)**

#### **2016 Chassagne-Montrachet Villages**

The 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet Villages, which includes a few drops of premier cru depleted by the frost, has a crisp hazelnut and smoke-scented bouquet that is fresh and focused. The palate is well balanced with a fine line of acidity, a subtle marine influence at play here with a touch of sour lemon on the finish that lends tension. It might just cut away swiftly on the finish, but it will still give pleasure over the next five or so years. Drink Date 2018 - 2028 **Rating (87 - 89)**

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

The 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet 1<sup>er</sup> Cru La Maltroie was taken from tank but had not been fined. This has a lovely, minerally bouquet reminding me of a limestone cave. The palate is fresh and tensile with a fine bead of acidity, very harmonious and poised with a nuanced, peach skin and dried apricot finish. There are just seven barrels this year, but each one is excellent-as good as the 2015 last year. Drink Date 2018 - 2028 **Rating (91 - 93)**

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

The 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet 1<sup>er</sup> Cru Morgeots has a more expressive bouquet than the Maltroie, with scents of citrus peel, apple blossom, cold flint and, later, orange pith. I like the energy conveyed by the aromatics. The palate is well balanced with a crisp entry. This builds quickly in the mouth, quite spicy and lively, not persistent like previous vintages but still precise and full of character. Drink Date 2019 – 2029 **Rating (90 - 92)**

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

The 2016 Chassagne-Montrachet 1<sup>er</sup> Cru Les Grandes Ruchottes was just a single (used) barrel because of the frost. It seemed to have a little more pizzazz and energy than the Caillerets on the nose, likewise the palate has superb energy and tension, with hints of peach and blackcurrant with a very harmonious finish. Try to find one of the 300 bottles. Drink Date 2019– 2030 **Rating (91 - 93)**

### 2016 Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru

The 2016 Chevalier Montrachet Grand Cru has such a tightly wound bouquet that I am moved to use the word unresponsive ! It was difficult to eke much out here, like a difficult interviewee. The palate is well balanced with a fine bead of acidity, lightly honeyed in texture with notes of grilled walnut and smoke, impressive length with a tang of spice on the aftertaste. Excellent, although I actually think the Les Grandes Ruchottes is better. Just one barrel produced. Date 2020 - 2035 **Rating (91 - 93)**