

DOMAINE DUJAC

This is Not Morey-Saint-Denis

Vinous – Neal Martin – 19 March 2019

My original intention for this article was to shepherd together three Morey-Saint-Denis-based producers that had organized vertical tastings in London last year: Domaine Dujac, Taupenot-Merme and Domaine de l’Arlaud. I assumed that the resulting article would get to the nitty-gritty of this appellation. Or that was the plan, anyway. When I assembled all the tasting notes, I realized that in fact, Taupenot-Merme was the only grower that had showcased a cuvée from Morey-Saint-Denis. Dujac had opted for a complete vertical of their Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts and l’Arlaud their Gevrey-Chambertin Aux Combottes (not that I have any complaints on either count). No worries; I would add one of the best-known producers of Morey-Saint-Denis, Domaine Robert Groffier, since Nicolas Groffier had recently shown me his splendid 2016s. I examined the notes and realized that Groffier, located right in the middle of Morey-Saint-Denis, does not actually own a single vine within the appellation.

So, even though all four producers are based in Morey-Saint-Denis, I ended up with an article that seems to be trying to ignore the appellation. That is a pity. Morey-Saint-Denis is often overshadowed by Gevrey-Chambertin to the north and Chambolle-Musigny to the south, and I would have liked to address that imbalance. On the other hand, the wines in question should be of interest to Burgundy lovers, not least because Taupenot-Merme and Domaine de l’Arlaud remain reasonable values within the market and deserve attention. Also, if it is any compensation, readers who do need their fix of Morey-Saint-Denis can read my article on Clos de Tart or Stephen Tanzer’s upcoming piece on Clos des Lambrays.

In the meantime, let us begin with one of the most famous producers in Morey-Saint-Denis, Domaine Dujac.



Domaine Dujac

Alec Seysses flew to London to oversee a nearly complete vertical tasting of Dujac’s Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts. The domaine owns 1.57 hectares in Malconsorts (out of a total 5.86 hectares), acquired when they purchased the Charles Thomas estate together with Etienne de Montille. Aux Malconsorts enjoys a propitious location, adjacent to La Tâche, Vosne-Romanée Les Charmes and Nuits-Saint-Georges Les Boudots to the south. Dujac’s maiden vintage was in 2005, although it was not shown at this tasting. I asked Alex whether their approach to the vineyard has altered in recent years, and he replied, “Next to nothing has changed.” This cru usually contains a high percentage of stems, and is fermented in stainless steel and matured in French oak, around 65-85% new, for about 18 months.



Alec Seysses, pictured at Domaine Dujac last November when tasting the 2017s from barrel. He runs Dujac with his brother Jeremy and sister-in-law Diana Snowden-Seysses

The vertical of Malconsorts was an intriguing insight into what I perceive as winemakers fathoming out the vineyard after acquisition. That is normal and even favorable; it takes a few vintages to figure out the DNA of unfamiliar terroir. Here, the first vintages are decent enough, although they do not really get to grips with the structure you expect from this Premier Cru. It is the fourth release, the 2009 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts, that really expresses the character of the vineyard. Subsequently, the domaine built upon that success with a brilliant if backward 2010 that is a joy to behold. Since then, the Malconsorts has become one of the staples of Dujac’s portfolio, and the nascent 2015 and 2016 augur stellar wines to come.

2006 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2006 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru, the maiden vintage from Domaine Dujac after their acquisition from the break-up of Thomas Moillard, has a pale hue with some bricking on the rim. The bouquet is relatively light but well defined, slightly ferrous in style with an earthy tincture. The palate is well balanced with a fine bead of acidity, though it lacks the backbone one seeks from a Malconsorts. A slightly bitter edge marks the leathery finish. It is acceptable considering it is already 12 years old and their second vintage, but clearly the Seysses family were destined to produce superior wines from this vineyard. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2018-2023 (89)

2007 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts (Magnum)

The 2007 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru is tasted from magnum. It has a similar bouquet to the debut 2006 with a slightly ferrous tincture, although there is a little more intensity here compared to previous vintages, hints of tomato vine developing alongside the light, tertiary red fruit. The palate is medium-bodied with tart red cherries and strawberry. This is a pretty Aux Malconsorts, more appealing than the 2006 with a lithe red cherry and strawberry finish, orange rind furnishing the aftertaste. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2018-2025 (91)

2008 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2008 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru has a more backward, more fruit-driven bouquet when compared directly to the 2006 and 2007 with high-toned Morello cherry and raspberry confit scents, just a touch feistier than I expect. The palate is juicier and displays more body than the first two vintages. There is more presence and a little more grip, although still falling short of what I would expect from this vineyard. However, its initially understated opening, discretely builds in the mouth and leads to an edgy, ferrous finish with touches of brown spice and orange rind lingering on the aftertaste. This is a very competent Aux Malconsorts, though the following two vintages are clearly better. Tasted at Flint Wines Malconsort vertical.

2018-2028 (92)

2009 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2009 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru is the first vintage that really expresses the character of the vineyard on the nose: greater delineation and *mineralité*, more penetration and authority thanks to its intense red cherry, crushed strawberry and cranberry scents that soar from the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with supple tannins; fleshy and sensual for Aux Malconsorts, perhaps more plush and rounded than expected yet still beautifully balanced. It has a tender, refined and lightly spiced finish with a dash of white pepper on the aftertaste. This represents the first "serious" Aux Malconsorts from *la famille* Seysses. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2018-2035 (94)

2010 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2010 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru is much more reticent and backward on the nose compared to the 2009 however, I love the "coiled-up" intensity of this Malconsorts that suggests it is built for longevity. Even in the glass, with aeration it reveals enticing red berry fruit, cola, tobacco and *sous-bois* scents that demonstrate more complexity than previous vintages. The palate is very well balanced with sumptuous tannins: layers of red berry fruit that feel delineated and pure, a discrete undercurrent of spice with a detailed finish that fans out with more confidence and gusto than the 2009 Malconsorts. Excellent! Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2020-2040 (96)

2011 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2011 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru is a step down in intensity from the 2009 and 2010: leafy red fruit, forest floor, the stem addition here jutting out a little more than previous vintages. The palate is soft and mellow on the entry, again, the stem addition dictating the style of the wine rather than the terroir, attractive in its own way. But I would have preferred more depth and *fruité* on the linear, rather low-key finish. Is there more to come? Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2018-2028 (90)

2012 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2012 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru appears to be enduring an awkward adolescent phase. The aromatics feel a little disjointed, the fruit tucked away somewhere else leaving tealeaf, bay leaf and nagging vegetal notes in its place - atypical for the style of this vintage. Alex Seysses told me that they had some reduction issues with this wine, possibly from the use of SO₂ in the vineyard as they converted to organic, that dissipated but then returned. The palate is much better and I suspect augurs for what is to come: filigree tannin, precise, mineral-driven, plenty of fresh and vibrant red fruit with impressive tension and vivacity on the pretty and pure finish. If you own bottles then I recommend cellaring for another three or four years, as I am sure the aromatics will return after this “dumb phase”. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2023-2038 (92?)

2013 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2013 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru is actually more immediate and pleasurable than its 2012 counterpart at the moment: vigorous red berry fruit intermingled with orange pith and crushed stone. It is not as complex as say, the 2010, but it conveys a feeling of just wanting to give pleasure. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannin intertwined with a fine thread of acidity. There is a mixture of red and black fruit, a hint of spice and *sous-bois* that segue into a very harmonious finish. The 2013 is endowed with more weight and concentration than I was expecting. Could it be the dark horse of the Aux Malconsorts thus far? Very impressive. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2020-2040 (94)

2014 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2014 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru has an intense bouquet with open-knit wild strawberry, raspberry and subtle ferrous notes. This is still quite backward as you would expect, but unfurls to reveal veins of orange rind and even a hint of tangy marmalade. The palate is medium-bodied with a grippy entry. This is perhaps the first Malconsorts from Dujac where I really notice the backbone and density, perhaps the first where I can really commend the *typicité* that floods through on the finish. I would not touch bottles for three or four years but there is clearly great potential. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2021-2045 (95)

2015 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2015 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru has a gorgeous bouquet whose only fault is that it will be difficult to resist in its youth. Copious red cherry and wild strawberry fruit lace with minerals, superb delineation and focus - this is a Malconsort that oozes confidence. The palate is medium-bodied but there is more density and volume here compared to previous vintages. The stem addition discretely interwoven with the fruit lending a light *sous-bois* note towards the sustained finish, and a tingle of spice on the aftertaste. Brilliant. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2022-2050 (96)

2016 Dujac Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru Aux Malconsorts

The 2016 Vosne-Romanée Aux Malconsorts 1er Cru, which had recently been bottled, has a tightly wound but intense bouquet that responds to aeration. The fruit appears a little darker than the 2015 with just a touch of pressed iris coming through. The palate is well balanced with a fresh, quite grippy entry. I admire the focus and precision on the display here and like the 2015, the stem addition is judiciously interwoven into the fabric so that it does not impede upon terroir expression. It feels long and tender on the finish, completing a Malconsorts with immense potential. Tasted at Flint Wines's Domaine Dujac tasting in London.

2023-2050 (95+)