

# Smash The Box...With Jeremy Seysses Of Domaine Dujac

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After a brief hiatus – and many thousands of miles in planes and cars – I’m back. Back on a plane that is – on the way home from Mexican mezcal adventures and here with a spiffed up this post on one of my favorite things – a chat with a friend.

It is no secret that I love Domaine Dujac based in Morey St. Denis, Burgundy – I think it is one of the great winemaking addresses on planet Earth. It’s also no mystery that Jeremy and I have been friends for a long time, we’re working on a few projects together and we’ve been know to flop on each others’ couches with regularity.

(That should serve as both disclaimer and fair warning of the impending candor.)

When Jeremy was recently in the U.S. I thought it a fine time to ask him to don his [King-of-Disco](#) costume and to talk about anything at all. Really, I left it up to him to pick a couple things he truly wants you, the reader, to know and none of the stuff writers often think you want to know (which, sometimes, ends up sterile and dull.)

So, I asked, what do you want to tell the world?

Jeremy started right in by saying he’s hopeful we can do away with [BOXES](#), well, certain boxes anyway, such as those which people stick other people into. (Jeremy noted, there have been some well-documented discussions in recent times regarding a certain box and we’ve elected to let this box lie so as to avoid beating a dead-horse.) Today he’s talking about his unease at seeing himself and others being labeled and, often times, inaccurately. He allowed that boxes do serve a role as we humans have a strong urge to simplify, organize and synthesize to facilitate comprehension. But, wine is a complex product, made by people and people are complex. So, while it is tempting to draw lines between industrial vs. artisanal, modern vs. traditional, natural vs. “not natural”, etc.; and taking sides, it is a perilous exercise. Offering himself as example, Jeremy pointed out that when he first went to the cellars of Dom Perignon in Champagne, he did so specifically to validate his prejudice that it couldn’t be big and be good. Despite this prejudice, he said he was all to pleased to be proven wrong – yes, it’s very big and yes it is very good. What’s the point? That the wine be good/drinkable and that while ideology is fine, the first role of wine is to be delicious. Ultimately, he’s of the mind that appearance should not excuse substance.

There's a lot to chew on in this observation...

Jeremy, who identifies himself as the complaining type, decided it was also an opportune moment to gripe about another issue – that being the misconception of *Domaine* vs. *Negociant* wines as well as the perception of his *Negociant* Wines vs. those of other producers. One of the big myths he'd like to debunk is the immediate assumption that somehow their *negociant* offerings are less special, particularly with respect to other *negociants*. Note, *negoce* is a big and broad box, ranging from people who purchase fruit on the vine to people who buy wine already bottled and everything in between. And, OK, he says, perhaps they're not quite as special as their *domaine* wines, but Jeremy is rightfully proud of his wines because they actually *do* control so much of the vineyard work. This is indeed a rare thing in the world of *negoce* where often times *negociants* just taste and purchase finished wines without a thought of how they were made. There's a big detachment there and ultimately a big difference in the result. So what's the rub, how do we help Jeremy out of the box? He's hopeful that you, the consumer, get on board and do your research. Ultimately, he believes if you care about what you're drinking, it is worth understanding how the grapes were grown as well as how the wines were made – particularly when it comes to those upon which so much praise is bestowed and for which you are paying so dearly.

Next up? Nostalgia. Jeremy's got all of this pining for the days of old directly in his sights. As a wine lover this makes sense to me, as a guy that is now the second generation running a famous *domaine*, I imagine that this is indeed a keen topic for Jeremy. He starts in by asking me how often do I hear something along the lines of: "it's not like it used to be or, they don't make them like that anymore" accompanied by a big nostalgic sigh? And how often is it justified? Less often than we think he says. Yeah sure, he'll miss the *Verset*, *Rene Balthazars* and *Gentaz* (me too!) and for sure these type of guys exist for every region. But, for each one of these mythic figures, there were a multitude of very ordinary producers so the hang-up seems misplaced. He believes this is especially so as there are so many exciting wines coming from so many different regions of the world. The cornucopia has never been more full while also expanding at a tremendous rate so, perhaps, the emphasis ought to be on the awesome present as opposed to an embellished memory of the past. I feel that.

At this point I couldn't help myself and I had to ask a question figuring it would be general enough: "[What makes you happy?](#)" After I clarified that we were still talking about wine, Jeremy jumped to name the critical mass of young wine professionals and wine lovers which has grown enormously and brought a groundswell of true passion. He then singled out the U.S. (**AHEM**) as a place where this is most evident. "In France they send you to *sommelier* school when regular school is going less well. Here in the U.S. you have professionals getting into wine for the love of it and we're talking about very worldly, capable people. This makes a difference." (And this from a French guy, I love it.)

Finally, Jeremy wanted to be sure he mentioned how excited he is about wines people actually drink and not just collect. It's not about trophies which often disappoint on the big night, it is instead about the everyday stuff – the regional, country wines and the energy that is put into these is awesome, he said. While acknowledging that Dujac is considered “costly” to some Jeremy does insist that the more casually his wines are enjoyed, the happier he is about it. So there, go out and pound some Dujac Fils et Père Morey St. Denis Village and say we told you to do so.

Cheers,

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