

Burgundy Report

by Bill Nanson

2018 Beaune – a large blind tasting



Tasted in Beaune, 02 March 2021

I find it's too easy to let the worst of a particular vintage colour your impressions of a vintage as a whole – call it a *lasting caricature* of a vintage. Because I usually finish my tour of the new wines of the Côte d'Or with the Côte de Nuits, my impression of the wines from there can potentially dominate my thoughts on the vintage in general – and what a poor year Chambolle (for instance) had in 2018 with as much as 50% of the wines deeply coloured and often volatile at the end of 2020. I remembered significantly less of such excesses in the Côte de Beaune but thought it worth challenging my ageing memory...

Here, tasted blind in Beaune 02 March 2021 were 108 samples of Beaune 1er Cru – including a decent selection of whites too. The wines were served as big mix, not by climat, though it would be interesting to see if certain 1ers would come to the fore more often. I had less interest in which reds were sealed with DIAM but for whites, I consider it an important factor for wine buying so noted in each case...

Summarising the winners...

First things first; it's a long time since I experienced so many corked wines – 5 from 108 bottles – this is not the only recent instance. A statistical 'blip' or are we returning to the bad old days of 1995-2005? None of the corked bottles were marginal, they were all real stinkers. Last November I tasted 170 Beaujolais Nouveau and met no instances of tainted wine – you are paying much more here!

As for the wines, the reds acquitted themselves wonderfully well. 2018 has many detractors – myself included – but that's largely for wines of the Côte de Nuits where you have to be much more selective than in the Côte de Beaune. The Beaune reds were, obviously, ripe in style – how could they not be from 2018(?) – but they were also balanced, well-textured and largely delicious wines – they will easily keep for 20 years, no problem, if that's your wish. From my chosen wines, it seems clear that I like some deftly used stems, though some in my list are also completely destemmed.

The whites were generally well-balanced too – though some will certainly improve in that respect as they lose their *'puppy-fat'* of fruit. The main issue on this tasting day was quite an anonymous style to many of the wines – more a tasty chardonnay style than tasty wines of Burgundy.

The reds

12 simply great wines, worthy of a special search, from 90 tasted. Listed in the order they were tasted:

2018 Joseph Drouhin, Beaune 1er Les Grèves

2018 Albert Morot, Beaune 1er Les Aigrots

2018 Saint Marc, Beaune 1er Clos des Avaux

2018 Sophie Joigneaux, Beaune 1er Blanches Fleurs

2018 Albert Bichot, Beaune 1er Les Aigrots

2018 des Croix, Beaune 1er Cent Vignes – my wine of the tasting

2018 Aurélie Berthod, Beaune 1er Belissand

2018 des Croix, Beaune 1er Pertuisots

2018 du Pavillon, Beaune 1er Bressandes

2018 Chanson, Beaune 1er Clos des Mouches

2018 Clos la Chapelle, Beaune 1er Champs Pimont

2018 des Croix, Beaune 1er Bressandes

The whites

Just one wine worth a special search from the 18 tasted:

2018 Clos de la Chapelle, Beaune 1er Reversées

(...)

2018 Aurelie Berthod, Beaune 1er Belissand

Heavy bottle and darkly coloured. A deep and vibrant nose – that's actually very inviting. Vibrant wine, direct in flavour, dark-red fruit. Great purity of finishing flavour despite a little oak – for keeping but a great wine...

(...)

