

*Tasted in Volnay with Etienne Chaix, 08 November 2018.*

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My first time tasting alone with Etienne – Jean-Pierre was 'recovering' on holiday – somewhere warmer!

There's been plenty of updating in the cellar – my first impression, more precise, less 'character' certainly less chaos – that's half joking – though I may become a little sea-sick from the (new) wobbly typing table that has been installed for itinerant journalists – I have to assume that Neal Martin has loosened the screws for those that follow!

**Etienne Chaix on 2018:**

*"2018 were very happy with the way the year unfolded. For us it was ideal; In the Spring the soil wasn't easy to work as it was so wet, but thereafter not really any incidents. We started our harvest 30 August for 6 days – with a little less volume than 2017, but still generous. Pezerolles and Saucilles had a bit of hail in 2018, the Pommards were harvested a couple of days later, but more due to the extra rain they had in the summer. It's probably a great vintage, certainly with more depth than 2017..."*

**Etienne Chaix on 2017:**

*"2017 – harvesting 6th September for reds but 31st August for the whites. The vintage like 2018; almost frost, we burned the straw and nobody can say whether it saved the harvest but after the trauma of 2016 we at least felt that we were not passive. A little rain just before harvesting avoided the chance for figgy or dry grapes – overall that was a help."*

The wines...



The whites were bottled the week prior to my tasting and were in very fine shape – there is much to recommend – their bottling is usually done before the harvest but because of the updating work in the cuverie there had been a little delay.

None of the reds were bottled – that would probably start in another three weeks – but all had been racked into tank about three weeks prior. The colours were modest – but that will be seen often in this vintage – more of a surprise was the modest depth and precision of aroma and equally, often inconsequential depth of flavour – though delicious flavour. Based on my many years of experience at this domaine I have to assume that my timing, in terms of their position during elevage, was poor and that it was just one of those days – I will try to taste a couple of the cuvées after bottling, to compare.

### **2017 Bourgogne Aligoté**

*Vines in the commune of Meursault; a small parcel of very old vines.*

Hmm, pretty, precise notes. Wide and fresh but with a depth of concentration too – intense and refreshing in the finish. Delicious wine.

### **2017 Meursault Les Chevaliers**

A fine nose with many pretty precisions. Extra volume, and depth of flavour a – different flavour profile, melting pure, beautifully formed wine – virtually no fat. Gorgeous and again refreshing. Top and very persistent. Bravo!

### **2017 Meursault 1er Les Cras**

A deeper, pure nose, with pretty citrus references. Wide, incisive, less directly sweet but also with plenty of lithe muscle – sinews that wrap around your palate. Vibrant, but with measured length of flavour – this is so different to how the wine is when mature – the evolution is always amazing. Excellent wine!

### **Les Rouges:**

### **2017 Bourgogne Pinot Noir Vieilles-Vignes**

*'Customers habitually buy this so it didn't seem necessary to change the label to Bourgogne Côte d'Or.'* Vines in both Volnay and the first vines over the border into Meursault too.

A wine with some density of aroma, just a little tight today. Today the palate has a modest entry, fresh flavoured, deep, growing flavour – an easy wine that's tasty and fresh but no great concentration. The finish is, however very tasty and with a more overt purity of fruit in the finish.

### **2017 Volnay Vieilles-Vignes**

*From 5 different parcels; Grand and Petits Poisots, Gigotte, Pacquiers and Famines.*

Like the Bourgogne, relatively modestly coloured. Another nose that doesn't want to play this morning. Fresh, open, elegant flavours that are a little floral and have more volume than the Bourgogne. A lick more tannin to be found here. The finish is, however, vibrantly delicious – hopefully a portent of the rest of the wine to come.

### **2017 Pommard Vieilles-Vignes**

*Normally from Cras, Saucilles, Vaumauriens and Poisot*

Just a little more aromatic precision of dark berry fruit. Another turn of the volume control on the tannin, but without overt grain, just a touch of astringence. Fresh, lovely energy, and a great mouthful of fruit here in the finish. Hmm – a great character!

### **2017 Beaune 1er Coucherias**

A little more aromatic density again – here with a nice line of pure fruit. Fresh, a direct wine – much more modest in the width, but with energy and excitement – much less astringence, indeed a silky line into a delicious finish – yum!

### **2017 Volnay 1er Cru Fremiets**

Back to a deeper nose, but with some consequent fruit in that depth. Here the palate is less ready with a modestly reductive undertow. A little more Pommard in style but opening in the finish with a contemplative extra dimension of flavour.

### **2017 Volnay 1er Cru Caillerets**

*Planted in 1982. 'The tannins here always show a little more, a sort of rusticity' says Etienne – but I will add that in that we must read 'rusticity in a Caillerets context' not a context of say Pommard...*

Still a nose 'under construction' but there is clearly something of Caillerets here with purer more floral notes on display. Hmm, a touch of tannin on entry but then fine, pure flavours in an open volume around the palate. Depth of beautiful complexity – but like all so far – airy wines, not wines of impact or overt concentration. Great finishing.... Excellent

### **2017 Volnay 1er Cru Champans**

Also not a big nose, but one of silk and good purity. Extra volume and certainly extra energetic depth to the flavour. Beautiful mid to finishing flavours – a mini-waterfall of delicious flavour. As good as the Caillerets for sure...

### **2017 Pommard 1er Clos Micault**

*Old vines, 5x the volume in 2017 – but then there were only 7 cases of fruit in 2016 from the old vines!*

Really a modest colour. Also like all so far and open if slightly inconsequential nose, some pretty fruit references but always on a modest level. Hmm, on the palate there is a little more depth showing here – and it's delicious depth of flavour, slightly sweet, maybe betraying a hint of oak. Vibrant, long and with the faintest touch of tannin – but less than Caillerets for instance. Delicious wine.

### **2017 Pommard 1er Cru Les Epenots**

*From Petits Epenots, in the last part before Beaune Epenottes, below Pommard Boucherottes*

A nice freshness of fruit, the first to show some floral accompaniment. A more direct intensity to the fruit and line of flavour here. Vibrant, and persistent too – that's a great finish too – more tannin than Clos Micault, more like Caillerets or a hint more than that even – but delicious and incisive – excellent!

### **2017 Pommard 1er Cru Pezerolles**

A little darker red fruit, freshness of aroma still the style. Supple, a little more depth of flavour,

the merest touch of reduction, but also seemingly more visible concentration than the other wines. Wide, complex, much more a complete wine than most in the cellar today – perhaps a twist of oak on the end of the palate. Super.

**2017 Pommard 1er Cru Les Rugiens**

Whilst still of modest volume, here is a nose with a very fine precision to it's small, sometimes (oak?-) spiced notes of complexity. Nice volume in the mouth, layers of pretty and complex flavour. Wide, a little vibration of flavour, tasty flavour, tasty wine – long too – lovely